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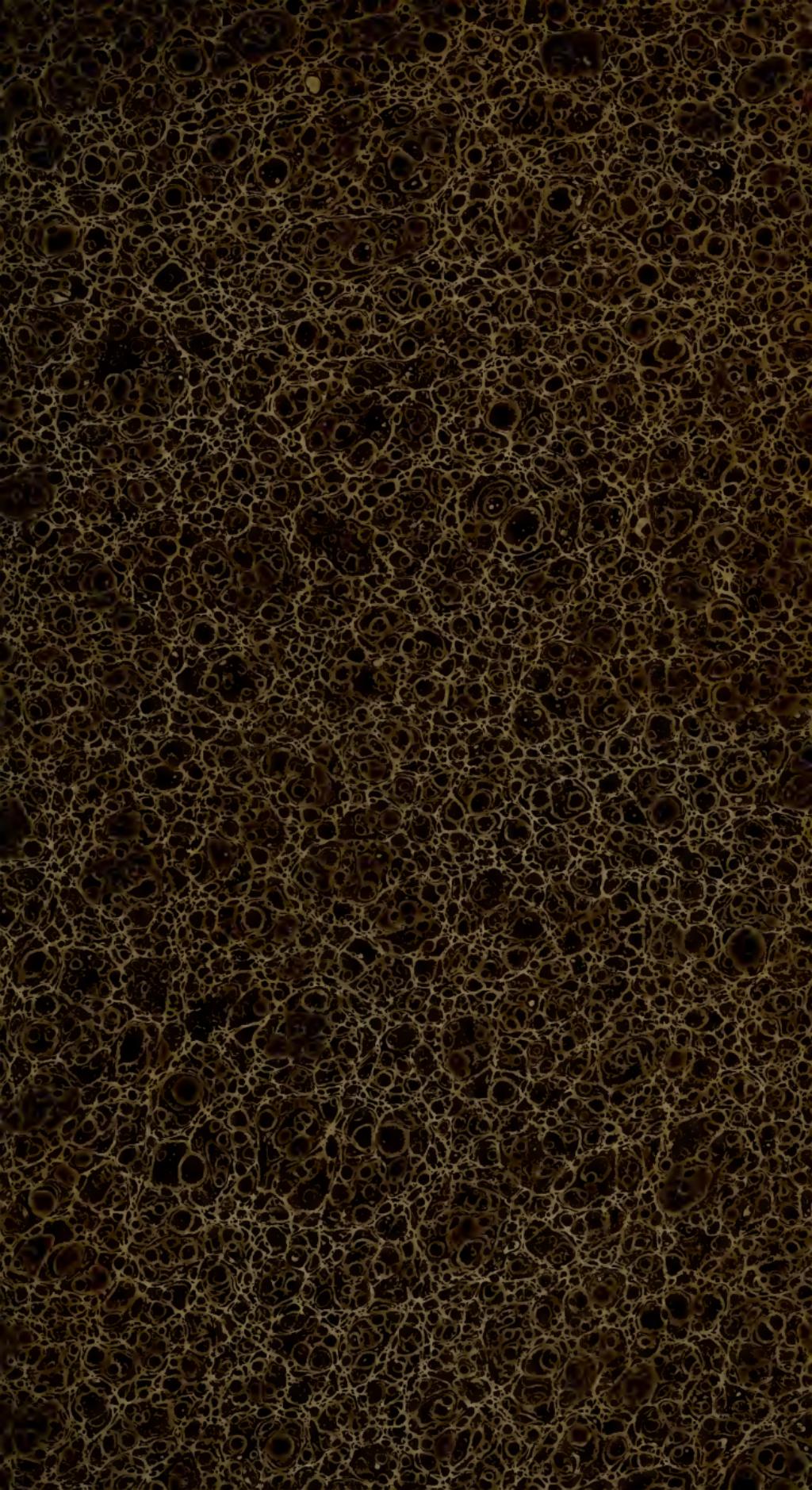


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THE
PERILS OF BEAUTY.

BY
CAPTAIN CHAMIER, R.N.,

AUTHOR OF

“THE LIFE OF A SAILOR,” “BEN BRACE,” “JACK ADAMS,” &c.

“Unequal task! a passion to resign,
For hearts so touched, so pierced, so lost, as mine!
Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,
How often must it love—how often hate!
How often hope, despair, resent, regret,
Conceal, disdain—*do all things but forget!*”

POPE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

PERILS OF BEAUTY.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Macintosh now began to see a new dawn. Schooled by other adventurers, he had begun to operate for himself. The mines of Mexico had done their best and worst ; about six millions of money had been wasted, frittered away, sunk in the holes from which they were to have drawn more. He then went to France, under the idea that he could wring some money from that half-pauper country ; and, failing in his endeavours in the capital, he tried the provinces. There he met with the

success he anticipated. France, after a ten years' continuation of the most frivolous debates, had begun to think of railroads and steam engines, and Macintosh, having discovered a hole in the ground near Nantes, bethought him of buying the same for a trifling sum—calling it an iron and coal mine—raising shares—managing the concern, and, very shortly after enriching himself, leave the company to be buried in the grave of their own purchase. It was true that some coal and some iron was once got from this mine; but it was nearly exhausted, was half filled with water, and was not now working. No sooner, however, did the proprietor of this valuable property find that an Englishman was eager to buy it, than he began to raise, not the water, but the price. He had offered it, until he was tired of mentioning it, for one hundred thousand francs. Now he raised his price to two hundred and fifty thousand francs. The brilliant idea instantly occurred to Macintosh to enter into a negociation for the mine at that sum, but by no means to

close the bargain ; then to make a flourish in England by advertisements (that food of all English cormorants after wealth)—raise fifty thousand pounds in shares—purchase the mine with this money—and, after disposing of the rest, in the most *honest* manner, declare the concern bankrupt, and purchase it again at about the original price ; he himself never being a partner, but the managing director.

This was the specious scheme into which he was now enticing the husband of Alice. To gain his point, he bound his victim, Alice, to forward the speculation ; he threatened her ruin—her shame—her exposure—if she revolted, and he was now about to carry out his great undertaking.

The morning following the scene we have described, Macintosh, in his conversation, ventured to advise Masterman to keep his speculation, or at least the amount of it, from his wife. Women, he said, never understood money affairs ; they were miserable financiers ; and although he had deluged the world with

writings on the currency question, they still remained as ignorant as babies in their cradle.

Masterman thought this very good advice, more especially as he wished to keep all his wealth to himself, and the conversation finished by Masterman taking shares to the amount of twelve thousand pounds, five of which was advanced for young Mopus.

Macintosh had not passed through Paris for nothing. If he failed with the clear-sighted French themselves, he was successful with one or two English, who, having little, and being inclined to get more, were led astray by the bland and engaging manner of this daring adventurer. The money was no sooner paid, than Macintosh called upon his victim, Mopus—congratulated him upon the certainty of his realizing a large fortune, and of having so useful a friend as Masterman — put into his hands an acknowledgment of his having received the five thousand pounds as consideration for a certain number of shares in the Nantes Coal and Iron Mines—complimented young Mopus on his beautiful pro-

nunciation of French—and, lastly, tried with great success to induce the son to draw the father into the speculation. The *name* of Sir Dionysius would induce many to follow the example of one so famed for the accuracy of his judgment and the clearness of his foresight.

It was an excuse, if one was wanting, to visit Masterman, to give him his receipts; and he called purposely when he had seen him go out; then, with the right of a privileged friend, he desired to be announced to Alice.

The poor girl trembled when he entered; never had woman so misplaced her confidence; and yet the brilliancy of the eye, the commanding stature of the man, his intelligent countenance, and his soft, silky expressions, with all the warmth, all the fire, of his passionate discourse when he had wooed and won her, still kept alive some almost extinguished sparks of her former love. To win a woman, a passionate volubility, sparkling eyes, and quivering lips, will succeed where

calmness and sincerity will be unavailing. Macintosh could speak of affection with all the stillness of emasculated passion—he could picture the romantic visions which haunt the brain of the credulous and warm the blood of the passionate — master of himself, he watched every variation of feature in his intended victim, and his untiring patience and perseverance almost invariably led to success.

“ Well, Alice,” he began, “ I have called to congratulate you on your prudence, and once more to call upon your love to forward my views. You are silent ! but, as I have something to demand, perhaps you show your discretion in becoming a listener. I have this day heard that the death of Frederick Clincher and his wife has so paralysed their parents that Hughes Everett has died, and the Admiral has been ordered to France by his doctor — that change of scene and of air may contribute to restore his health. He seems to care more about his son having deserted his profession than for his death. Snimens,

finding the heiress averse to him, has consented to marry his first love. I must have the other, and, if possible, be before Snimens; for, if he is first married, he will never let me into the family. Sit down, therefore, and write me a strong letter to your old one-legged admirer, and speak of me in all the fervour of our former acquaintance — such, for instance, as may be found in this letter (showing one of her own passionate epistles of former days). I must go to France directly; so delay not the letter, but begin at once. Do you hesitate?"

"I am so lost, so fallen, so heart-broken, that I have but one resource which can inspire my hope. Here, at your feet, Mr. Macintosh, I implore you, on my knees, drive me not into desperation, nor plunge me further in guilt."

"The woman's mad!" said Macintosh, as he raised her up. "What guilt is there in your telling the Admiral how long you have known me, and in your borrowing a few past thoughts for present occasion? I do not ask

you to be the means of my introduction. I have introduced myself; but I want a letter to the Admiral, declaratory of our long acquaintance; and one to Caroline, in which you will mention how often I have spoken of her, and the conviction on your mind that I love her. These hints inspire thoughts; and, if once a girl has an object before her, it grows familiar with the mind, and prepares the heart to receive an impression which love may indelibly stamp. Come—my time is precious."

"I cannot, and I will not do it—it is enough that you have already drawn my husband into your mesh of dangerous speculations. Woman as I am, and unaccustomed as I may be to discourse on these subjects, yet I am clear-sighted enough to see the result. My husband and myself ruined—the son of my oldest and best friend entrapped in the same rash venture—the blight cast upon my own family—and now another victim sought, through my influence, to swell the triumph of the most degraded of mankind—with only one inferior to yourself, and that the wretch that stands

before you, and who, not a moment past, knelt at your feet, in the foolish hope that your heart might yet retain one spark of honour, one gleam of affection."

All the best feelings which this unfortunate girl still retained seemed to animate her words, and there was a resolution in her manner which would have startled most men from their purpose. Macintosh knew the sex better than to inflame a passionate woman by an equally passionate answer. He burst into a fit of laughter, and begged to ask if her mother had taught her that speech by heart, or out of what book she might have obtained it? Then, taking her hand, which she in vain attempted to withdraw, he said—

" Fair Alice, you have known me long enough to know that neither you, nor your husband, nor all your acquaintances, could ever turn me from a pursuit or daunt me in an undertaking which I have resolved to accomplish. You flew into your heroics about your husband's superfluous money, and it has not succeeded in baffling me; but it has laid

between you an everlasting apple of discord. At this I rejoice — for, in spite of your fine-flown sentences, and your worst opinion of me, I envy that man the charms of Alice Masterman ; and I felt an inward satisfaction when I heard him check you with some asperity, for your interference. Why then struggle in the toils which must ensure your captivity !— You are mine — bound to me by every voluntary tie. You have subjected yourself to me, and must either obey my commands or meet the vengeance of my displeasure. All other passions, appetites, and feelings dwindle into insignificance when opposed to my revenge. Baulk me in my endeavour, pretty Alice, and the hissings and howlings which will accompany your exposure shall be my sweetest music. My determination is fixed as the course of the sun. Write that letter, or your ruin is irrevocable—there is the paper —write.”

“ Never ! — In spite of your cowardly revenge, though every thing conspires to hurl me from my envied situation and plunge me

into poverty and disgrace, I tell you I will not write this letter, nor will I ever see you again. Spare yourself and me the horror of further contest."

Had a flash of lightning dashed across the face of Macintosh, it would not have illuminated it more than the fire which seemed emitted from his eyes; his face resembled a demon's, his lips quivered with rage, he seemed to breathe with difficulty, and, whilst this indication of the volcano of his mind gave warning of the eruption about to follow, he riveted his eagle eyes upon his victim, and folded his arms, as if firmly to press upon his heart and stop its rapid pulsation.

Alice met his look with all the dignity of courage, aided by returning virtue; and, desperate as was the resolution she had adopted, she had courage enough to fulfil it. For this resolution she must brave shame, dishonour, and contempt, become an outcast, lose her husband, and see her name, her family, and her connexions blighted and blasted by the virulence of public scorn.

“ Hear me, before I go for ever, excepting those times when my name shall be announced to you as the warning of a calamity near at hand ; for then I shall be present to you. By that Heaven which is above us, and which neither of us can enter, and that hell which is below, and gaping to receive us, I will be true to my purpose, and in this you shall never accuse me of falsehood. If you refuse to write this letter, this day shall be your last of comfort and security. As yet your secret is safe—as yet you are believed immaculate—as yet you are beloved. Choose between doing that which cannot turn me from my course—for I shall marry her if it suits my convenience—or prepare to find your grandeur tottering beneath you, and feel the withering contempt of those who now cringe to you in all the subserviency of dependence. Look at that poor woman who is dragging after her those miserable, ragged, half-famished children—that woman shall be rich to you—shall be envied by you—and gladly shall you avail yourself of such a disguise to escape the

greater loathing of society, which shall shun you as a pest, and regard you as an apple from the shores of the Dead Sea—fair to sight, but ashes within. I have spoken—I await your answer."

"It is thus—" said the now fearless woman, and she rang the bell.

"Remember, Alice, remember my words—remember by what I have sworn."

"Show Mr. Macintosh the door," said Alice, in a firm tone of voice.

"I have the pleasure of wishing Mrs. Masterman good morning," said Macintosh, "and likewise a long continuance of health, wealth, and happiness."

He made her a most respectful bow, which she answered by a most dignified curtsey, and, as the door closed, she fell upon the sofa and fainted.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Admiral Clincher, after having heard that his son survived his companions, and had landed at New York in a very precarious state of health, immediately resolved to cross the Atlantic, and made preparations for so doing ; but, before he had made his necessary arrangements, another ship arrived, which announced his son's death ; and nearly on the same day he received a very kind letter from the captain of the Snarler, mentioning his having been obliged to write to the Admiral on the station, and report also to the Admiralty the absence of his son.

From his infancy the Admiral had been attached to the service ; he had always re-

garded it as the main stay of the country, and he looked to the wooden walls of old England as its best and surest defence; he had been brought up in the strict school of discipline, and he considered that hanging at Tyburn or at the Old Bailey was far preferable to being dismissed from that service to which it was his greatest pride to belong. It is a fact, that the gallant old officer felt the letter of the captain with more poignancy of regret than even the one which announced his death. "When I placed him," he said, "in that service where a man is daily and hourly exposed to peril, I steeled my heart to hear of his death, for I thought it not unlikely; but never, never did I anticipate that my son could become a deserter, or have an R placed against his name. Now I care not how soon I am placed in the grave, since my name is disgraced."

"The doctor, sir," said Marling, as he ushered in an old shipmate of the Admiral's.

Loud was the conversation which ensued, the Admiral asserting that he wished to die,

as his name was disgraced ; and the doctor, giving a direct negative to both the assertions. The conversation finished by the doctor becoming the senior officer, and ordering his patient, whom he considered somewhat inclined to fall into a low, melancholy state, to go to Paris.

“ Your hatred to those fellows,” said the doctor, “ will turn your thoughts another way ; and, much as you detest them, you will have no objection either to their climate or their wines.”

“ What am I to do with my daughter, doctor ?” asked the Admiral. “ There is that lanky-haired, snivelling fellow, Snimens, sticking as close to her as the mate of the deck to the grog-tub. I wish, with all my heart, I was dead, and she married. As for Caroline, she will take care of herself ; she does not believe one word any man says who pretends to be better than his neighbours.”

“ A clever girl,” answered the doctor ; “ take them all to Paris with you ; it will give you unceasing occupation to guard against French

adventures and English hypocrites ; the sooner you go the better. Poor Hughes Everett was buried yesterday."

"Ay, look there!" said the Admiral, "how many ways there are by which children shorten the days of their parents."

About a month after this conversation, the Admiral, Marling, and the daughters, landed at Boulogne from London.

"Keep your eyes about you, Marling," said the Admiral ; "remember these fellows ; they are free and easy chaps, and will make a great deal too free with our luggage, if you don't mind."

At that moment arose that discordant noise which greets the ears of every traveller landing in France ; a thousand tongues seemed employed by as many pair of lungs, to roar out the names of different hotels ; a dozen arms were extended for the object of forcing a card into the new comer's hand ; and, as Marling was determined to take all he could get, however insignificant it might appear, he took one from each man, who, in acknowledgment for

the kindness of preferring his hotel, said, “Merci, monsieur.”

“Mercy!” repeated Marling; “why, you pack of monkeys, do ye think I am going to ropes-end you? What a set of frogs they look, surely!”

“I think, Marling,” said the Admiral, “that when we were amongst the negroes on the coast of Africa, we saw handsomer men than we see now.”

“I never, your honour, saw such a poor, pitiful, picked-up-along-shore set of jabbering marmoset monkeys as these fellows! Leave the carpet-bag alone, you ugly crapaud, or I’ll shove you into it; why, it would break your back to carry a pair of boots and a great coat.”

Miss Caroline watched the manners of the new nation with intense interest, whilst her sister kept moaning and groaning over the depravity of the world in general, and especially directing her sacred denunciations against such a poor, blind, bigoted, ignorant, misbelieving set of heretics, who never

thought of an hereafter, and who wasted their precious moments in idleness and dissipation.

The Admiral's passport was examined, and the whole of his party were desired to walk out; but, just as the pious Miss Clincher and her maid got to the outer door, some suspicion entered into the minds of the Custom House sharks that appearances were against the maidens, and that they bulged out more than any natural means would occasion. With some rudeness they were desired to stop, and were turned into a small room to be examined. No sooner had the young lady been told that such a thing was in contemplation, and that perhaps by a great bewhiskered Frenchman, than she gave vent to her feelings, and declared she would resist any desecration of her sacred person. Two old women, however, soon began to search her, by passing their hands over her person, like a blue-bottle fly cleaning itself. From underneath the maid's outward garments, a sufficient quantity of muslin was taken to make

two summer dresses ; and small bundles of English needles, besides one or two other articles of prohibited wares, came into the hands of the examiners.

“ Where is your sister Caroline ?” said the Admiral.

“ They stopped the lady and the maid to examine them,” said the commissioner.

“ Who did ?” cried the Admiral.

“ One of the men,” answered the commissioner of the inn.

“ What ! boarded and taken my young missus !” said Marling ; “ examine her hold for a cargo ! capture a prize alongside the Admiral ! Make a lane here !” said Marling, as he pushed aside a dozen fellows, and forced open the door in the direction in which he heard the voice of Miss Clincher. There she was, in a very improper dress to meet the eye of any man. The women, having found their contraband articles, insisted upon a closer examination, and had proceeded to undress them. Marling’s first exclamation was—

“ Made a prize of, by all that’s pretty !

stripped of their rigging, and only the hull left!"

Miss Clincher held up her dress before her, to shield her person; the maid told him to get out of a lady's bedchamber; and poor Marling, quite astonished at what he saw and heard, ran and reported that the daughter and the maid were unrigged, and likely to be laid up in ordinary.

Nothing could exceed the indignation of the Admiral. He purposely put his wooden leg on two of the Custom House officers' feet, and stamped and swore in such undeniable English, that no man could have mistaken his profession.

The commissioner, at the first stop to take breath on the part of the Admiral, recommended a little moderation, and hinted, that as these contraband things had been found, the less the Admiral said about the business the better, or he might be fined, and the ladies punished.

The Admiral swore he would return to England that instant, and that he would pay

any sum to get out of such an infernal country ; but the commissioner succeeded in soothing him, and arranged the affair, leaving the contraband goods as true and lawful prizes.

This was a fresh and very serious annoyance to the Admiral ; he was perfectly convinced, in his own mind, that all the English papers would be full of this business, and that his name, already disgraced by his son, would now be a by-word and a scorn, as the obnoxious term “smuggler” would be affixed to it ; or, disguise it as they might, he would be named as having taken contraband goods to France, which were seized upon the person of his own daughter : nay, he had no doubt but the undressing of the damsel would form a very prominent feature in the descriptive history.

The young lady consoled herself by half-a-dozen scriptural quotations, and ultimately settled in her own mind that this was a very proper infliction, for her leaving the sisterhood to reside amongst heretics.

Caroline laughed at the whole affair, and the lady of the hotel came to console the

party by saying, that it was an every-day occurrence, and that they were very lucky in not being detained in the office half the day.

Marling considered himself in an enemy's country, and always kept ready for immediate action. He had conceived the droll idea, that as the English Navy had so thoroughly beat the French upon every occasion, an English seaman would be such an object of dread to these miserable victims, that they would run from him in daylight, but be ever active to destroy him by night ; and he felt very considerably annoyed when he found he did not attract universal admiration and attention.

The Admiral sat upon a sofa, and continued one tide of abuse against every thing he saw. Nothing pleased him ; the fireplace was too large, and half the heat went up the chimney ; the chairs were heavy, unsightly things, into which a man sunk, as if he was seated on a mud-bank ; the sofas were so round, that it was a business of peril to lie down upon them ; and the whole concern was a vulgar, tawdry exhibition.

Caroline, on the contrary, was much pleased with all she saw ; there was a certain degree of gaiety in the looks of the people ; none of them seemed to mope about, as if they were just made bankrupts, or to walk quick with their heads down, absorbed in thought, and urging forwards upon some great speculation. Every body seemed to enjoy life ; there was a lively hum of conversation ; and even the beggars seemed to have more manner in their solicitation of charity, than in the dogged demand so often experienced in England.

Harriet Clincher was busy up-stairs, as Marling reported, repairing damages, and wondering if any of the Frenchmen saw her divested of some of her garments ; and the maid was very much annoyed at the indifference of the soldiers, who might have seen her in that situation, but who never gave themselves the trouble of looking.

Marling entered the room, and told the Admiral if he went to the window, he would see something between a line-of-battle-ship on wheels and a wild-beast caravan, drawn

by six horses ; and, as he spoke, a diligence bound to Paris drove up and stopped between the Hotel du Nord and the Hotel de Londres. Marling wetted the top of his fore-finger, and held it to see which way the wind blew, as he was quite confident no such a lubberly craft could possibly beat to windward, and unless the wind was fair she must come to an anchor.

The Admiral surveyed the huge, unsightly mass with the same wonder as a physician would survey a bicephalous child ; he could not conceive how any man conversant in ship-building could have put such a thing together ; and when he saw it move on, he wound up his remarks by observing, that from time immemorial the nation were called lubberly Frenchmen—that they knew no more of ship-building than they did of navigation—

“ And there,” said he, “ is a proof of it. There’s hotel *due north*, and I’ll be hanged if it does not stand east and west.”

That was quite sufficient for Marling, who unhesitatingly declared them all to be a lub-

berly set of rascals, and walked out to see what was cooking for dinner, as he had particular orders from his medical man not to eat cat's tails, or stewed frogs, and he was very desirous of ascertaining that the Admiral was not poisoned by any such food, on which, he knew, from every soul who had ever visited the country, the generality of the people existed.

"I shall go on to-morrow, girls, to Paris," said the Admiral ; " it's no use unstowing the trunks. If I am to die in France, I may as well die near their famous burial-place. It must be as hazardous as working through the Straits of Babelmandel, getting up to the capital, if every conveyance must be built as strong and as bulky as that unwieldy thing which just now rattled like thunder through the streets."

As Caroline was very anxious to see Paris, she clapped her hands, as her sister said, in unholy joy, and forthwith ordered every thing to be ready by nine o'clock the following morning. Harriet was anxious to retard this forward movement, as Mr. Snimens might acci-

dently arrive, and be a safe escort through the foreign country.

At dinner, one everlasting tide of abuse came from the Admiral. The soup was all cabbage and old carrots chopped up small ; the *fricandeau*, a dish which is as certain of forming a part of the dinner as a plate is of being a part of the service, looked to the jaundiced eye of the Admiral like a South American's chin with the beard chopped short ; and there was as much green food round the chicken as would have served Nebuchadnezzar for a week's graze. The wines were soon discovered to be weak, washy stuff, without strength and without taste ; even the brandy was inferior to what is sold in England ; and as for the dessert, it was made up of old stale cakes, which had rowed guard for a month, and which were dry enough to choak a bulldog.

There was no doubt that the doctor had acted wisely in sending the Admiral to France. His irritability against the nation

had somewhat removed the distress of his mind, occasioned by his son's tarnished name. If he was dissatisfied, he was not depressed ; and in his abuse he had spoken more than he had done for a month, and had frequently smiled at his own ideas, or the extravagancies of his Gallic neighbours.

After dinner, he walked down to the port, accompanied by his daughters, and attended by Marling, and, having ascertained that the wind blew from the direction of England, he inhaled the breeze which had passed over the rich and luxuriant fields of his native country, and from the end of the pier saw an English ensign wave from the peak of a man-of-war brig standing up towards the Downs. The Admiral now grew excessively patriotic : he spoke to Marling in glowing terms of many a victory gained under that flag, and he wondered that any set of men could bear the sight of the bunting which had waved over the tri-coloured rag at the Nile or Trafalgar.

“ They have no sense of shame, Marling,” said the old Admiral ; “ if that flag gives their

hearts as lusty a twitch as it delights mine, they would shut themselves up in a back room, and drown themselves in their own miserable wines."

Marling stood as most old seamen stand when near the sea — legs rather wide apart, and arms firmly folded together. There is a kind of independence in the attitude, and seems to imply, "You are my element, and I am not afraid to face you." A Frenchman buttons himself close up, squeezes his features into contortions, as if he had the toothache, thrusts his hands into his pockets, and not unfrequently expresses himself truly enough thus:—" *L'air de mer me fait mal.*"

"Come along, girls," said the Admiral, "it makes me low-spirited now to look long at the sea — ay, that sea, on which I have been so many years, and which witnessed the triumphs of Nelson."

"I don't think, your honour," said Marling, "that it's quite the same sea, for here's some I have got in a bottle, and it tastes of garlic and salt herrings."

The Admiral could not complain of the beds ; he acknowledged the superiority of those articles over the hard knobby ones in English inns ; but he made up for his praise of them by his abuse of the teacups, which to him seemed made expressly to hinder any one drinking out of them ; they were all shoulders and no waists, like a tight-laced girl ; and as for the knives, they were more like the ends of a New Zealander's arrows than the ship-shape, round-pointed, elegant-balanced affairs used in English houses. Every thing afforded the Admiral some scope for his vituperation, and the post-horses did not escape the universal censure.

Jack Marling eyed the postillion with looks of considerable regard, particularly his large, unwieldy, preposterous boots, in which his thin legs had as much sea-room as a jolly-boat in Portsmouth harbour ; and as to the harness of the post-horses, "there they beat us," he said—"all rope, by the powers !—splice it, if it's carried away ; sheep-shank it, if it's too long ; add to it, if it's too short ; repair da-

mages in a moment, and no need of tongues or buckles to belay it. I suppose," said he, musing to himself, " when they laid their vessels up in ordinary, they did not know what to do with the rope ; so, rather than keep it in the boatswain's storeroom, or return it to the dockyard, they served it out to the postillions ; and very wisely they acted, too, or it would have made oakum to calk the seams of an English deck."

" Are you stowed away behind ?" said the Admiral.

" We are endeavouring, your honour, to share out the birth ; but, owing to the build of Miss Harriet's maid, we must get into a rough sea-way before I shake down into my place. Start ahead, helmsman, and mind how you luff round the corner."

" *En route*," said the *commissionaire*, who stood bowing with his hat off, and away rattled the Admiral's carriage. The postillion cracked his whip ; Marling roared out to keep less noise on the forecastle ; and the prodigious efforts of the heavy animals nearly managed

to progress the vehicle at the rate of five miles an hour.

“Just the same,” said the Admiral, “as on board their ships—all noise, and no work.”

The Admiral’s was a handsome carriage, and stowed with great care as to neatness. Marling walked round it often before he started, to see that no straps were hanging down, no ropes’-ends, as he called it, towing overboard. The Admiral strongly objected to any hat-cases being made fast to the stern, and hanging over it like beef and cabbage in a merchant-ship: the consequence was, that Marling took the liberty of jamming all such articles into the hold or the wells, without any regard to the probable smash of the goods.

“Well, Mary,” said Marling, as the carriage turned into the Paris road, “there we get our starns to the sea, and our figure-heads towards the Admiral’s last roadstead. He will never live to come back again; and I’m blessed if we shan’t be so tightly stowed in this seat, that they’ll have to raise a pair of sheers over the carriage to get us out. There’s no fear of our breaking adrift in a roll; and she may

pitch as heavy as a frigate in a head-sea without starting our starn-posts."

Mary affected modest indignation at Marling's remarks.

"Why, you need not look so taken aback either, Mary," continued Marling, "I did not say you were badly built, because I could not say that, after what I saw at the Custom House — and most ships that are bluff about the bows, and carry their catheads well forward, are generally full about the quarters, and seldom run very small in the waist." Here Marling roared out, "Postillion ahoy ! do you think we are all dead, and that you are driving our funerals ?"

The French postillion merely looked round, and pointed to the slightly rising ground, which he called a mountain, and then dismounting, he leisurely walked by the side of the horses, until he had to descend the other side, before doing which he came to put the shoe on the wheel. This Marling declared was not necessary, saying the ship was too heavy to start ahead, and that it would be quite time enough

to stopper the cable if she was inclined to run it out to the clinch.

The Frenchman seemed to understand that Marling would not have the shoe put on, so, mounting his horse, he began to descend the hill, driving the carriage off the centre of the road, and plunging it into every rut and hole in the route, in order to stop its sudden rush.

“What the devil are you doing in the eddy-tide?” said the Admiral.

“Keep out to sea, you Frenchified, frog-eating lubber,” said Marling; “put the helm a-starboard, or you’ll have us in the narrows in a minute.”

They might both have bellowed like bulls, had not Caroline’s voice attracted even the ears of the obstinate driver, who, listening to her orders to avoid the sides of the road, trotted down the hill without the smallest danger.

The Admiral had been preciously knocked about; he swore he never had been in such a sea-way before, and that if the carriage had not been of the best English manufacture it must have foundered.

The postillion, not at all satisfied with having been baulked of his intention, if possible, to smash the vehicle, jogged on a little further, when he began to crack his whip, and Marling saw a young woman come out of a house by the wayside, with a plate and a small glass in one hand, and a bottle in the other. The postillion drew up and entered into conversation with the woman, whilst Marling called out that if it was the Admiral's order to splice the main-brace, he should like to have his allowance.

At the end of an hour and a half, the Admiral had made good ten miles out of the one hundred and fifty.

“I’m blessed if our old jolly-boat, rigged mudeon fashion, would not beat the Admiral’s barge at this rate,” said Marling. “Come, bear a hand and shift the horses — we shall never make the harbour to-night without the breeze freshens.”

CHAPTER XXX.

Sir Dionysius was now far advanced in years; and in the calm solitude of his beautiful place, he prepared himself for the inevitable fate which awaits us all. He had been known in early life as an active politician; he had been a great favourite with his sovereign, and had won golden opinions from all who had been numbered amongst his acquaintances. As he sat reading the newspaper, one of the servants entered.

“Here’s Jem Broadway’s wife, Sir Dionysius, very anxious to see you, and begs, for Heaven’s sake, you will not refuse her.”

“I should not refuse,” said the Baronet,

“ for her own sake, and therefore she need not have invoked Heaven ; tell her to come in.”

In a few minutes the Baronet heard convulsive sobs from more than one woman, and the voice of his servant, who said, “Cheer up, Mrs. Jem, he’ll do it, if any one can do it ; he’ll never turn his face from the wretched ; go in and tell him boldly ; I’ll open the door.”

Sir Dionysius stood by the window which overlooked the long sloping lawn. He felt in his pockets to ascertain that he had money enough to relieve the necessity of Mrs. Broadway, who, he presumed, had been sent by her husband to ask for some assistance, as his pedlar-like life did not seem to be very promising.

“ Have mercy upon me, Sir Dionysius—have mercy upon me ! ” said Mrs. Broadway, as she entered the room, and fell at the feet of the Baronet ; “ if ever a poor creature could move your heart, oh ! let me, good sir, implore your assistance, and God will bless

you ; and I and my husband will lift up our hands to Heaven for your kindness.”

Here she burst into a flood of tears, and sobbed so piteously that the worthy Baronet began to feel in his own coat-pocket.

“ John,” said the Baronet, “ lift Mrs. Broadway into that chair, and leave the room.”

“ No, no,” sobbed the poor woman ; “ here, on my knees, let me pray to you ; oh, do not turn me away, good Sir Dionysius ! let me speak—let me implore your interference.”

John, having learnt to obey, placed the poor woman in the chair, and shut the door.

“ Now, madam,” said the Baronet, “ dry your tears, collect your thoughts, and tell me what you want. The poor or the distressed shall never want a friend whilst I am alive ; for, ‘ taught by that power which pities me, I learn to pity them.’ ”

“ Then Jem will be saved,” said the poor woman. “ Oh ! dear sir, how can I thank you ! let me kneel at your feet, and kiss your hands.”

“Indeed I will let you do no such thing ; if you want me to be of any use, you must relate the facts ; and mind, Mrs. Broadway,” said the Baronet, “you tell me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

“Oh ! good sir, I tremble to tell you the truth, and yet I dare not conceal it ; when you hear it, you will bid your servant turn me from your door, and I never shall live to see my poor husband again. Oh ! do not—do not cast me from you, and I will tell you all as truly as it happened. Oh, good God ! that ever I should be obliged to say it—that I, the wife of that man whom I love so dearly, should be forced to tell the disgraceful story ! but it must be told, sir : my husband is sentenced to death, and left for execution.”

Sir Dionysius made a rush to the bell, and rang it. The servant was close at hand. “Order the travelling carriage this instant, and send to the village for four post-horses ; quick. Now, madam, go on.”

“That is all, sir, that is all ; can you save him ? I stood by him at York on his trial ;

and when the jury returned a verdict of guilty, he said to me, ‘ Fly, Jane, to the Baronet, he is my only hope.’ Oh, that ever this disgrace should have happened to him ! his poor mother will break her heart ; but I, thank Heaven, will never see the hour that my poor husband shall die upon the gallows !”

By degrees, Sir Dionysius learnt that Jem Broadway had been enticed, in consequence of the death of his donkey, to take a rough and apparently worthless horse off a common ; that he placed his wares on its back, and proceeded by a cross-country road to gain some distance from the place where the theft was committed, and, in so doing, he came to a small market-town, where, putting up the wearied animal, he sat down with his wife to enjoy some bread and beer. A miller, to whom the animal belonged, was in the habit of frequenting this market-town every Tuesday, and, unfortunately for Broadway, put up generally at this house. He was a cross-grained, ill-natured, surly, revengeful fellow,

and came into the room where the Broadways were sitting, in no very amiable humour.

“Good morning, sir,” said the landlady, dropping a courtesy.

“It will be the worst morning for *him*,” said the miller, pointing to Broadway, “he ever saw; come in, constable; that’s the man; off with him to Justice Bungle. Here are all the witnesses who saw him put the horse up, and here’s my man who will swear to the animal, and so will I.”

Broadway never attempted to deny the theft. Quite in vain was all supplication on the part of the wife. The enraged miller was resolved to be revenged; and Broadway, his wife, and all the witnesses were, in half an hour’s time, undergoing examination.

Even Bungle, who was as stupid a fellow as ever adorned the bench, could not well mismanage this case; for Broadway at once, although warned by the magistrate, confessed the whole truth, declaring his wife did only as he desired her, and, consequently, was not amenable to the law.

He was sent to take his trial at York, and there he was tried, condemned, and his fate seemed certain. His wife had been tried with him, but the judge had ordered her acquittal upon the ground before mentioned.

Sir Dionysius took Mrs. Broadway in his carriage to town, and drove directly to his old friend, who was then Secretary of State for the Home Department. He was admitted as soon as announced, and, leading in the poor woman by the hand, burst into tears himself, as he attempted the almost impossible task of turning away the executioner from a condemned culprit. Mrs. Broadway knelt down, and, with her hands clasped together, kept saying, "God soften his heart!—God give him strength to save him!" and these seemed the only words the half-frantic woman could call to her aid in behalf of her husband.

In the mean time, Sir Dionysius eagerly pressed his suit, and seemed to rise with greater energy as repeatedly the Home Secretary observed, "It cannot—it must not be.

The crime is so common, that nothing but the gallows can check it. Upon what grounds, Sir Dionysius, can I recommend this man to mercy, when, at the same assizes, three other criminals are also found guilty, and the order for their execution will go down this very night?"

These words of ill omen did not seem to make the slightest impression upon Mrs. Broadway. She remained in the same posture, repeating with great rapidity the same words.

"Look," said Sir Dionysius, "my dear Lord, look at that picture; already her brain is half turned, and she has, thank Heaven, not heard your opinion. Before the little reason that is left her is gone for ever, do, I beseech you, my Lord, lend a kind ear to my prayer. This man's life I saved once when he was a mere child; I took him to my house; I brought him up; and he, in return, perhaps, saved my life. I am bound to him by the strong tie of gratitude. I would take him back this moment into my service. The man is not an habitual thief; the present crime

has sprung suddenly from circumstances admitting of much extenuation, if you, my Lord, would credit her assertions, as I do. She has told me that they were both fatigued with carrying all their fortunes, after the death of their donkey—that, seeing the horse, they thought to relieve themselves of the burthen—and that it was their intention to purchase another animal, and to have returned the horse; but that the next morning, before almost the market had begun, they were seized and committed."

"I am as ready, my worthy friend, to listen to any recommendation from you as any man; but, pray observe the difficulty of my situation; others are condemned for the same crime; and willingly would I sanction the reprieve of them all, could justice be satisfied, and the souls of others executed for the same crime rest quiet in the grave. I see no one extenuating circumstance that can authorize me in breaking through an established rule, and of setting aside the judgment of the Judge."

“ His previous good conduct, my Lord—his resolution to have returned the animal !”

“ Ah ! my dear friend, every man standing at the foot of the gallows could trace back to some time when a previous good character might be produced ; and every wretch who is condemned to death seeks in his heart the poor consolation that the act for which he is about to suffer was the impulse of the moment, unpremeditated, and committed under the honest intention of one day restoring the goods. It cannot be, much as I grieve to refuse you. The law must take its course.”

The woman started on her feet, and exclaimed, as she fixed her glazed eye on the Home Secretary, “ Sir, by all that is dear to you as a husband, a father, a man—listen with compassion to the humble supplication of the being who clings to him for support. Save his life, dear sir, and this poor heart shall pour out prayers without ceasing, that he who had proved merciful in his authority on earth might receive from a higher power the same mercy for which, at our last hours,

we all must pray, and without which we all must fall."

" Listen to her, my Lord, I beseech you—listen to her;" said Sir Dionysius, as he caught in his experienced eye the tremulous motion of the secretary's lips, and saw the difficulty with which he restrained his emotion. " Listen to her, and let me join my prayer to hers."

The miserable woman threw herself at his feet, and kissed his hand.

" Ah, my Lord," continued the Baronet, " I know well that the hand which those dry and fevered lips have kissed will never sign her husband's death-warrant."

" Upon what ground can I, dare I, intercede for her?"

" The goodness of your own heart, my Lord, will best prompt the means. Spare—spare his life, and the personal favour to me shall be as highly valued as the boon you render to that wretched creature."

The eyes of both the men were full of tears; but in the woman's there was a burning

heat which made the balls throb, and hindered that spring of comfort from doing its genial office. She looked with a kind of maniac supplication, but did not speak, and could not weep.

“I will do all in my power,” said the secretary, “to save him.”

The woman gave a loud shriek, and fell on the floor; and some assistance being sent for, Sir Dionysius pursued his subject with all the warmth and generosity for which, throughout life, he had been famed; and when Mrs. Broadway recovered her senses, she heard the secretary say—

“If commuted, he must be transported for life.”

Sir Dionysius, as he left the office, congratulated himself that the worst was over; and, having dried his eyes and composed his mind, led the poor woman to his carriage, having determined to drive her at once to the coach-office, and, putting her into the fastest conveyance, enable her to be the first to communicate the result of her activity, her love, and her devotion.

There was a great disturbance in the hall, and a shrill, cracked female voice rose above all the rest: it said:—

“ I will see him. I am an Englishwoman; you may bind me for the moment, but you shall not tear me from my hold as long as these old arms can cling to the pillar, and here I’ll stay until he comes out, and God will make me know him.”

Mrs. Broadway stopped suddenly, and the Baronet endeavoured to force her on.

“ I cannot go any farther—I dare not, sir. Pray stop.”

“ Stop, woman!” said Sir Dionysius, “ every moment is of value to you. How do you know what the fear of death may produce in your husband?”

“ It’s true, sir; but how dare I face poor Jem’s mother? and that’s her voice I hear below.”

“ That is unfortunate, indeed,” said the Baronet; “ but, if we whisper to her that he is reprieved, perhaps she will go quietly away. We must try it; for every minute of time to

your poor husband is most precious. Those who expect death at a certain hour cannot count the minutes which hurry past them with the velocity of the wind."

"Ah! Sir Dionysius," said the old woman, who left the pillar round which she had encircled her arms to clasp his knees; "my son, my own dear boy, must die! come back to my lord. I'll crawl upon the ground to kiss his feet, if he will but save him! You would not turn from the widow and the mother in her distress? No, no, no; none ever applied to you in vain. Come back, come back, and then these rough men will let me pass, and let me do a mother's duty in saving the life of her child!"

Sir Dionysius whispered in her ear.

"It cannot be true," shrieked the old woman; "oh, God bless you! no, no, it's done to make me leave this place; and when the child is dead, I may die of a broken heart for his death and his shame!"

"Did you ever know me tell a falsehood, Mrs. Broadway? Look here," and he brought

forward the old woman's daughter-in-law ; " her prayer has not been in vain : return to your home, and I will take care you see your son again."

" Merciful God !" she exclaimed ; " how can I thank you both ? I'll go ; I believe all you say ; and, as you pledge your word that I shall see him again, I believe it. Here, child, take this money, it will quicken your return. I can walk, it's only sixty miles home. Go to him, child, give him this kiss, and tell him to fall on his knees, and bless this great and good man for all he has done. Go, go, go ! don't wait a moment !" As she said this, she forced her way through the crowd, and walked towards Charing Cross, the mob believing her a mad woman, from her constant repetition of " saved ! my boy is saved, saved ! "

When the Baronet was in his carriage, the first question he asked the poor creature by his side was concerning her money.

" You must not spend a farthing of that old woman's," he began ; " it is the hard

earnings of days, and months, and years—preserved to make the last hours of life free from the dreadful fate of the poor. I long since put by for your husband, as you know, twenty pounds, and, as I gave presents to my other servants, I gave one also to him; and, besides, I added the interest—never mind how I have done it—but the twenty pounds have grown to fifty: here they are; place them in some secure place, and tell Broadway from me, he will see me again, and if I can be of any further use to him, to let me know. Here, my poor friend, take this purse."

"I would not touch it," said Mrs. Broadway, "no, not even if I heard that by so refusing my husband's death was certain. Jem's last words to me were:—'Mind, Jane, I know the Baronet will offer you money, but my curse, Jane, my curse, the curse of him left for execution, rest for ever on your head, if you take one penny from that good man.' I would not touch it, good sir, if it would

make me a queen, or even call back the day on which we took that miserable horse."

"It is not mine, I tell you, woman ; it is his. I owe it to him ; and, if you won't take it yourself, take it and give it to him, and tell him I am tired of keeping other people's money."

Mrs. Broadway never answered a word, but kept her hands behind her, holding one within the other, as if to keep a mutual guard, lest one of them should be enticed to touch the money against her will.

"There, there," said the Baronet, throwing it in her lap ; "take it, and tell your husband I am convinced he intended to return the horse, and never contemplated a theft."

Mrs. Broadway let the purse slip off her lap, and it fell on the bottom of the carriage, and no persuasion of the Baronet could make her touch it.

On arrival at the coach-office, she insisted on paying her own place, and, having so done, she fell on her knees, in spite of all exertion to the contrary, and kissed the hand of the

man who had saved her husband from so ignominious a death.

The pace of the coach seemed that of the tortoise, whilst her expectations and wishes flew on the strong speed of the eagle. Each stoppage was magnified by the poor woman into an hour; and never were horses changed so slowly, or the coachmen so pertinaciously attached to the luxuries of a tavern bar. In fact, Turpin's wonderful ride would not have been fast to her, in the present mood of her mind.

On arriving at York, it was past the hour allowed for criminals to see any one. The gaoler knew her, and refused her admittance; she fell on her knees and implored him to be merciful, as she had a great secret to communicate. “I will only remain five minutes.”

“It is against the rules of the prison,” said the gaoler.

“If you were in his state, and your wife on the evening before the execution asked for admittance, what would you say to the man

who would not transgress some trifle of his orders to grant so great a favour?"

"That he was a brute," said the man. "There, go in; five minutes, remember, and in the morning you can come again as early as you like."

The criminal was in the condemned cell; the only sound heard was that of the workmen preparing the horrid engine of death, and now and then a coarse shout from those brutalized by the constant recurrence of the scene. He was alone; for he had manifested so calm a mind, and so resigned a disposition, that no anxiety was felt lest he should disappoint the public of their savage show, and forestall his death by some few hours. He heard the gaoler's step, and for a moment lifted his eyes to the small grated aperture, to see if the last hours had fled so swiftly, that already the herald of execution was at his door. No, no! that could not be; his faithful Jane had not arrived! and, whatever the bitter pangs of the last parting might occasion, she would be true to her word, take his last kiss, and once more clasp him to her heart!

The door opened, the gaoler was pushed aside, and his wife fell senseless in the husband's arms!

"Jane, my darling! Jane, my own, my only love! look up, speak, speak, girl, speak! I can bear it all; I am prepared to die; so make my fate certain, and then we will kneel and pray together."

With all the nervous agitation of one so situated, Broadway attempted to restore his wife to her senses. The gaoler took some of the water — the wretched fare of those condemned to death — and, on sprinkling her face, and laying her flat on her back, soon perceived some signs of animation. Broadway now felt that his fate was certain, that his wife had failed in her exertions to save him, and that, overcome by fatigue and despair, she had thus made known the unwelcome news, being unable to speak his dreadful sentence!

As returning life gave reinvigorated strength, she clasped her arms round his neck, and the only word her tongue could utter seemed

caught from the remembrance of the mother : “ Saved ! saved ! saved ! ” she screamed. The gaoler re-echoed the word with a deeper voice, and, Hope animating the unfortunate criminal, he caught the sound in his eager ears, and his lips babbled out the word with a vacant incoherency.

Still did the poor woman clasp him tighter and tighter ; and, when at last her tongue found its wonted utterance, with the first words she released her embrace, and, falling on her knees, said :—“ Kneel down, Jem, with me, and pray to God to bless the Baronet, for he has saved your life, and restored me to you ! ”

The goaler, whose heart had become seared to the world’s pity, who had seen hundreds in the last hour of life, when Hope, which upheld them, was crushed by the fatal mandate of death, and who had learnt to regard all the prayers of the criminals as a sudden impulse of the last moment, leaned carelessly against the door, and witnessed the scene. Broadway knelt by his wife, and held her hands upraised

in his, and together they poured out a heart-stirring prayer, "that he who had thus befriended them in their desperate situation might at the last day be preserved by HIM who is the father of the fatherless, and whose ears are never closed against the prayer of the unfortunate."

As the prayer was finished, Jane, now perfectly herself, related the scene with the Secretary of State, and then mentioned the offer of the money. Broadway let go her hand, and, looking her full in the face, said: "Did you take it?" and her answer restored her again to his arms, as he wound her closer to his heart.

The mother's generous exertion to save her son caused Broadway's heart to beat with frightful rapidity; he looked with a vacant eye upon the money, which he poured out into his wife's lap, but he clutched the purse and thrust it next his heart, and, buttoning his vest close over it, folded his arms to keep it more secure.

“Your five minutes is over,” said the goaler; “and I recommend you to be off and get something to eat with that money.”

“Here, take some,” said Mrs. Broadway; “and, when you put the glass to your lips to drink, remember the first draught is to the health of Sir Dionysius Mopus.”

“Are you certain,” said the gaoler, with a sharp look, “that he’s not going to be hanged to-morrow morning?”

“That I am, or I should not have been here until daylight.”

“Then I won’t take a farthing, for he might want it; but if he was going to be hanged, then it would have been no use to him, and might have given me an hour or two’s pleasure. Come, turn out, ma’am; if he is let off you will see him often enough before you die. What a noise those fellows make getting the gallows up; it’s a villainous shame to disturb the poor fellows who are going to be turned off at nine. Come, don’t stand hugging and kissing there; if you don’t want me to get turned out of my situation, you’ll

let go your husband, and save me the trouble of turning you out."

"To-morrow, Jem, I'll come early. Good night, don't look so sad. I tell you you are saved, and you know who did it."

CHAPTER XXXI.

Masterman and young Mopus were now fairly embarked in the visionary hope of making enormous wealth from the hole in the ground near Nantes. Macintosh had turned the whole of his talent, and made his plausible manner subservient, to his great object. He had, for a few days, spared Mrs. Masterman the pain of his visits. But he had nurtured his revenge, and now he was disposed to act.

Masterman was so blinded by the adventurer's golden prospects, so lulled into confidence and security by his manner and his descriptions, that all the prudent hints, all the cautious whispers of Alice, were disre-

garded, and the character she herself had first given of Macintosh was everlastingly brought to her remembrance.

Alice now saw how fatally her husband was caught in the mesh—how useless would be all endeavours to take the film from his eyes—without making him aware of her own perfidy ; and she had to watch the ruin of her husband, and see the wealth, which placed her so far above her equals in birth, pass to the hands of the man who had dishonoured her. Alas ! she saw that even the miser may transmit his miserable mind to his progeny.

For Mopus, too, she felt keenly. She had received unnumbered civilities from his father, and the highest compliment a woman could receive from the son in his offer of marriage. And in that she was not blind to the fact, that, at the time such offer was made, she was not in possession of one farthing, or likely to be so. She, therefore, turned in her active mind the best mode of saving him from the ruin which she knew to be inevitable if the

course were continued. By alarming Sir Dionysius, perhaps, she might save not only his son, but her husband.

Alice was in the act of beginning a cautious, guarded letter, in pursuance of the above resolution, when the servant announced Mr. Macintosh. Her firm heart forsook her at this trying moment, and she allowed him to enter and the servant to depart.

“I come, Alice—”

“My name is Masterman, sir,” she replied.

“I think, my dear, it ought to have been Macintosh,” he continued, smiling; “but to me it is Alice—dear Alice—lovely Alice—or by whatever epithet I think fit to add. So, as you know how completely you are in my power, perhaps you would act more wisely to get out of your perilous position by allowing the unwelcome freedom which I think proper to take. Sit down and listen to me. I once loved you—loved you dearly, tenderly, sincerely. Nay—start not! *you shall* hear me, painful as it may be to you. Nay—humbling, debasing, degrading as it may be, *you shall*

hear me, and I will rule your destiny. Alice, when first I saw you, I loved you with all the sincerity of which my truant nature was capable. I saw in you the fairest form — the most accomplished mind. If I had been rich, you never would have married another. At that time my heart was yours, and well I knew that the attachment was mutual."

" To what end, sir," said Alice, " am I to listen to this? — If it is to recal to my mind my own degradation, believe me, your society is sufficient, without your words. If it is to wean me from my present affection, by any declaration of your own, spare, oh, spare me the insult ; nor force me, every moment of my life, to recoil from myself, and shrink with disgust from the debasement of my own heart."

" I loved you, Alice, with all the force and fervour of a young and ardent mind. You knew my failings—you knew, when your mother refused my first offer to marry you, that the demon of gambling was deep rooted in my heart. In spite of your mother's strict injunctions never to see me—never to write to

me—never to think of me—you kept me aware of your situation, by a correspondence as warm as it was sincere—you welcomed my presence most cordially — and, fearing a marriage, you—”

Here Alice rose, agitated, from her seat.

“ Now, why start up ?” continued the cold-blooded lecturer — “ why interrupt me with words ? Is it likely, I ask, that I can hate you ? No. Is it possible that I can tear the original from my memory, whilst this portrait feels the warm beatings of my heart ? Can a man so far change his nature—his very soul—as to forget the loveliest object that ever animated it, or endeared his early recollections ? No—you are still the same Alice Rivers, and the same I would ever have you. Your letters are all couched in the language of unchanging, unchangeable love. Every one breathes but those words, written in all the agitation of passion, and dictated by the pen of love — true and genuine love, emanating from the heart.”

“ If, sir, you had one spark of honour,” ex-

claimed Alice, “ you would have destroyed those letters. How often have you declared you did not possess one line of mine, but some few verses ; and now I find you have treasured up those very letters to cause my destruction ?”

“ I am not vain, dear Alice, but I would wager half the sum I have received from your husband, that, at this very moment, you have kept mine—a lock of my hair—and a dark profile ; and, if you have not, you have not been so cautious of my love as I have been of yours.”

Macintosh pronounced this in a slow and emphatic manner, keeping his eyes fixed upon her, and believing, from the manner of his victim, the truth, that she had retained those very articles—so fondly does the first love of a woman dwell on any recollection of that delightful time, and so fearful is the heart of destroying any recollection of the illusion.

“ You promised that whenever you married you would continue that correspondence.— You asked me, as an honourable man, to

respect you as a wife—you declared that your greatest happiness would be to see me again, and to listen to the words of the man you could never cease to love. Have you kept *your* promise? When you took my note, I called—I found you alone—but I soon saw your love was changed, or, at least, that you would be spared the company of the man whose presence must for ever control you—and I was hurt to find that ever Alice could forget me, although I know she has forgotten others. I resolved upon the line I am now pursuing. I dare say your husband (I hate him because he is your husband) has told you how far he is embarked in a speculation with me—for husbands generally whisper their golden visions to their wives. He is now fairly in the whirlpool which will swallow him up, and you alone can save him. Are you disposed to do so?—or are you, by your determination not to forward my views, resolved to make me pursue the next best excitement to love—revenge!"

Mrs. Masterman remained perfectly silent

—apparently quite unconcerned—and never deigned to give an answer.

“I presume,” said Macintosh, the colour rising in his cheeks, “that I am to consider your silence as a confirmation of your former avowal.”

“I am, unfortunately, sir, obliged to sit here and listen to you,” said she, at length, “even after your declaration of the plunder of my husband’s property. But I think it right to protect my own. Unless you wish a repetition of the former insult I was constrained to adopt, you will leave my presence, preserving my former answer as my fixed, unalterable determination.”

“Strange and incomprehensible woman!” said Macintosh—“are you so blind to your own ruin as still to goad me on to my fatal resolve? Has the world’s scorn—the pointed finger of shame—the certainty of disgrace—no terrors for you? Can you be vain enough to suppose that the beauty, the acknowledged beauty of Alice can defend her against the envy and jealousy of her sex?”

“ What have I to fear but my husband’s wrath?—and that I already merit. Have you not told me that you have involved him in large and ruinous speculations?—that already his money is in your hands?—that poverty awaits him?— and that his further ruin shall be involved in my shame? No!— I have courted the cloud, and now it may burst its thunders over my head. Your whole conversation shall be repeated to him. I will write to Sir Dionysius Mopus— already you see I had begun the letter when your unwelcome presence disturbed me. I feel myself so debased that I cannot fall lower—nay, not even in my own estimation. And, to save the man who generously made so unworthy a person his wife, I will sacrifice myself entirely. You have heard my resolution— spare me the further pain of again summoning my servant.”

“ Alas, poor Alice!” said Macintosh, with a diabolic sneer—“ by to-morrow you will have no servant to summon—or worse—you shall live in the painful suspense of the exposure— you shall see the suspicion of your

husband — and you shall fail in your courage to carry out your grand and heroic determination. My next visit will be a more unwelcome one than this. For the present, farewell !”

Macintosh left the room, and again Alice was alone. Hers was a severe trial—for she had read the deep and dark revenge of the man she once had loved, and still might have loved, had he not betrayed the meanness of his mind. She felt the certainty of the blow, but knew not when or how it would fall ; and, whilst in this reflection, if it were better at once to speak to her husband, or await the first attack of Macintosh, young Mopus was announced. He came in with all the high spirits of a man likely, by sudden wealth, to shake off his allegiance to his father, and to become free to act for himself. He had towering ambition, excellent talents, and, divested of his Gallic mania, promised to be a rising man in the state.

“ You look annoyed, Mrs. Masterman,” he said, as he shook her hand. “ I hope my visit is not the cause.”

“ No, indeed, Mr. Mopus ; for, if I counted the numerous times you have been welcome, there would not be one visit so welcome as this. I have much to say to you of great interest to yourself ; and I know you will excuse my interference, when you become convinced how much I have your welfare at heart.”

“ *Un mariage de convenience, n'est ce pas ?* —a recommendation to unite myself with the Admiral's daughter, now in Paris ? Neither ? Then another Macintosh, to double my hopes and my fortune ?”

“ Rather an advice to retire at once from all acquaintance with that man. Your father would never sanction a speculation which might involve your prospects and your honour. Supposing that this mine turns out a bubble — how are you to repay the money already advanced ? I do not ask because my husband advanced it — acquit me, I pray, of any so mean a design. Your own honour would tempt you to reimburse him. From what source could you do it ?”

“ I feel no uneasiness upon that score, although I thank you for the hint. I met Macintosh at the corner of the street—he was on his way to Paris—he leaves this evening—perhaps even now is gone—and his assurance of the great extent already realized made me eager to see your husband.”

“ Of late,” said Alice, with a sigh, “ he has been much estranged from me—he lives in the city—he neglects entirely all parliamentary business, excepting on great occasions—he appears absent when at home—eats less—and has become thoughtful and fretful.”

“ The universal rule by which you judge of a man’s prosperity, or his prospect of sudden ruin. There is something very strange about you to-day, Mrs. Masterman—you look frightened at every word—and your colour comes and goes like the hectic flush of a consumptive patient. Tell me what is the matter; and, although once your lover, you shall find me always your friend.”

“ I would be yours now; and leave you to prove yourself mine, should occasion require

it. Let me then urge you to sell all your shares in this perilous undertaking, and be again a son dependent on the best of fathers —release your mind from the hope of exaggerated gain, and find on your pillow the repose of a man with sufficient fortune to live in luxury, divesting yourself of all the fears and anticipations of the speculator."

"If, Mrs. Masterman, I were inclined to follow your advice, I could not do it now; for, by a clause in our agreement, I am obliged to offer my shares to Mr. Macintosh first."

"And why can you not make him the offer to-day?"

"Because, as I told you, he is gone to Paris."

A flush suffused the beautiful countenance of Alice, and, for a moment, she hoped that this was the suspense which he had threatened.

"Let me, once more, Mr. Mopus," said she, "urge you to sell all your shares. Ask me no questions why I recommend this so strongly —so urgently; and this shall be the best proof of my knowledge of the affair—Mr. Macintosh

will not return you the money ; nor will you easily find, in another week, a purchaser."

" Have you thus advised your husband, Mrs. Masterman ?"

" It is a painful duty I have reserved for this evening ; when I have done it, you may hear from me. Take my advice — think of what I have said — and believe me sincere in friendship."

Mopus paid an unusually short visit ; he felt somewhat alarmed, and resolved to follow Macintosh, and, if he had not embarked, to offer him his shares, to see if he would eagerly purchase them.

It was a cold, miserable evening in November ; one of those thick, yellow fogs usual at that season had already darkened the day, and at four o'clock it threatened to rain, and become a murky night. Masterman, after his city visits, generally visited his club, and came home about six. As yet the harmony of the marriage-tie had only been once ruffled ; but a great alteration had taken place in the husband's devotedness to his wife's society when

at home, for after dinner he not unfrequently retired to his library, and there covered sheets of paper with figures, and seemed so absorbed in his calculation that he seldom returned to the drawing-room.

At dinner they met, and Masterman was more talkative than usual: he mentioned also Macintosh's departure for Paris, and that he started at four o'clock; and, after the usual gaiety of a *tête-à-tête* with a lovely wife, Mr. Masterman went to the drawing-room, and the husband, directing his servant to bring the wine into the library, stirred his fire, and commenced recalculating his almost interminable calculations. With him time flew quickly; but not so with Alice. Slowly the hand of time seemed to pursue its revolutions on the dial; the solitary tick of the clock alone disturbed the quiet of the room. Every now and then the distant rumbling of a carriage, or the hollow moan of the freshening wind, broke the dead silence. Bold, daring, courageous as she once had been, Alice felt her nerves unstrung, and a fearful timidity come over her.

It was now nine o'clock; Masterman had never come up-stairs so late, and an awful apprehension of some disaster crept over her, until she feared her own presence. Slowly and silently, as if her step would frighten her by its sound, she descended the staircase, and, opening the library door, she entered the room without disturbing her husband: his eyes were riveted on a slip of paper. With all the apprehension of the immense danger of her situation, she advanced close enough to see the handwriting was her own, and a part of a letter; at once her own conscience accused her, and she retired from the room holding her heart, lest its loud and full beat should alarm her husband. She again gained the drawing-room, and then, feeling herself secure in the absence of the man who, an hour before, was a protection in his presence, she pressed her trembling hands to her forehead, and in one second ran over her long arrear of crime, now fearfully present. All her courage had forsaken her; she dreaded the moment when the fatal secret must be revealed, and, in spite

of her firm resolve, she would have prostrated herself at the feet of Macintosh, and would have prayed to be spared the ignominious exposure.

Masterman still sat reading the letter: again and again he perused it; again and again he saw it was his wife's hand. It ran thus:—"I can have either of them; one is tall, and in love; the other short, bald, but rich; but I am yours to command, and shall follow your advice. You *may* direct my hand, but my heart is ever *yours*. I think Mopus most of a gentleman by birth and education, but he has not as yet sufficient fortune. Masterman is evidently a mushroom, low in birth, short, bald, ugly, and ignorant; but, as I only want a husband to represent you, *as a father*, I shall make up my mind directly, if you sanction it, and marry him."

Here the letter was cut off; the reverse side only showed that the letter had passed through the post-office, for the red stamp was still visible, and the "To" of the direction remained. In vain Masterman tried and tried

to fathom the mystery ; how came this letter, or part of a letter, amongst his papers ? who could have placed it so conveniently to be seen ? Could it be a device of Alice to render him more attentive to her, and to wean him from his speculations ? In vain he endeavoured to find a thousand excuses ; the post-mark rose as a powerful evidence to prove the letter had been sent, and the date of July 14th tallied exactly with the day on which Alice must have received his offer ; yet how could he suspect one so seemingly pure, so apparently attached, so beautiful as Alice ? and, as he recalled her to his mind when the ceremony was performed, her virgin timidity vindicated her innocence, and he believed the lines a forgery done from some spite, and stamped with a false post-mark, to draw his suspicion from the cowardly hand that sent it. He could not, he would not, suspect her ; she wore upon her countenance the strongest proof of innocence, and he reproached his heart with having, for one moment, entertained a suspicion.

In order to trace, if possible, the writer, he preserved the letter in a secret place, and, with a heart beating with every generous emotion, he ran upstairs to clasp his wife to his breast, and ask her pardon for his long absence.

He found her still in the drawing-room, her hands upon her forehead, and her whole figure shaking like a person with an ague; he caught her in his arms, and imprinted a hundred kisses on her pale, inanimate face, for she had fainted as he touched her, and remained insensible to all his accusations of himself for having left her thus alone, and all his fervent promises, never again to be so forgetful of the duty he owed the best, the kindest of women.

Alice slowly recovered, and found herself on the sofa, her husband kneeling by her side; and, as he chafed her forehead, he repeated kiss upon kiss upon her white lips. The past soon again was present to her mind, and, fortunately, the uninterrupted torrent of Masterman's discourse enabled her, at that moment,

to collect her thoughts ; and, as she pressed him to her revived heart, she said—

“ Do not leave me again so long, for I trembled at your absence.”

“ No, never, my dearest Alice, never ; I was engaged about some foolish speculations, and—”

Here the vision of the letter passed before him, and he felt a tremulous motion pass over the form of his wife.

“ I was wrong to neglect you, but you never sent down for me as usual ; and, in my abstraction of mind, I never saw it was midnight until the clock warned me of my negligence and your solitude.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

“ What’s the name of this place, Caroline ? ” said the Admiral.

“ Montreuil, papa ; it was here that Sterne mentions the story of poor Maria.”

“ I wish he’d mention how long we shall be getting up this infernal hill.”

“ Hard a-starboard ! ” roared out Marling to the postillion, as he saw a diligence coming down upon them. “ Don’t you see that deep-laden transport down by the head, come pitching along the roadstead ? it’s very difficult navigation, Mary ; and if I did not keep a sharp look-out and con the ship, we should be capsized before we got into harbour. Well, old Shiver the Mizen, what do you want ? ”

“*Passeport,—s'il vous plait, monsieur.*”

“Pass the port,” said Marling! why, it’s right ahead of us.”

Miss Caroline, who alone had the advantage of some boarding-school French, made the best use she could of it, and the postillion was desired to go on.

The post-house at Montreuil stands close to the only decent inn in the place, and no sooner does a carriage arrive than a person steps forward, and recommends the woodcock pies, which, owing to the numbers of those birds in the vicinity, are the staple commodity of the place. The Admiral, who had in his youth eaten salt junk hard enough to take a polish like mahogany, had, in old days, become much addicted to the pleasures of the table; and the very name of woodcock pie was music to him: two were instantly bought. Away went the carriage again; and, when it was clear of the *pavé*, an attack was ordered on the savoury pastry.

Harriet, who had scarcely spoken a word, but who had turned over many pages of a

small hymn-book, was not at all averse to the proposition, but she insisted upon saying grace before the pie was opened.

“Bear a hand then, my dear,” said the Admiral; “there, that will do; I never say grace when there’s no table-cloth. Open the pie, Caroline.”

She did open it; and, instead of that delightful, high-flavoured jelly, tasting of the rich essence of the best of birds, were seen, like a couple of mummies in dry wrappings, two very suspicious-looking things, carefully folded in a thin paste. The beaks were visible, and confirmed the Admiral’s apprehensions, that the pies were French pies, and, consequently, not honest pies. The Admiral took the bird in his hand, and, having carefully adjusted his spectacles, began to unwind the folds of this mummy in paste. After taking off fold upon fold, like parcelling from a rope, a poor little, thin, miserable thing remained in his hand; the long neck and long bill came adrift without any unnecessary labour, and a small skewer was seen, which

had connected it to the carcase, and which, instead of being a woodcock's, was nothing more or less than a young crow's !

The Admiral, from the time he had left Boulogne, had done nothing but abuse the country and the people, and this incident did not increase his good-will towards either. In fact, the doctor had proved himself quite right in his conjectures, that the novelty of the scene and the strange sights so often witnessed in France, would draw his mind away from the imaginary stain upon his name by his son's desertion from the service.

At every post, when the lame, the halt, and the blind crowded to the carriage windows, he liberally sprinkled his sous, until he detected that it was a sinecure to be a cripple ; that no sooner had he given to one than others sprung up like the Hydra heads, and that, when the charity was over, they all quietly sat down and shared out the profits.

Harriet was enraptured at this equal division ; and nothing could persuade her but that it was generosity on the part of those who had

received the gift, in participating it with their less fortunate but equally destitute companions.

At length, the carriage drove into the court of the Hotel de l'Europe at Abbeville, and not even the Admiral could find a fault, excepting in the high and slippery polish of the rooms, and the danger of the wooden staircase from the same reason. The party were shewn into a room overlooking a very large garden, where every thing seemed in excellent order; a most excellent dinner was served, very different, indeed, from the everlasting fried sole, mutton-chop, or beef-steak of an English inn; the Admiral sat down prejudiced from the fraud of the pie; and although, when some snipes were served, he most scientifically dissected them, to ascertain if they were, like the mummy in chancery, half of one and half of the other species, he got up so far favourably impressed with the country, that all the snipes and wood-cocks were not young crows, and that a much better dinner was given in France for the money than ever was offered in England.

At daylight, the Admiral, his servant, and Mary, were in the church; and here, again, it occurred to the Admiral, that, however much some illiberal people might censure the want of religion in France, if the churches in England were opened at daylight, not two out of two thousand of the most pious would frequent them, whilst here almost every man, woman, and child of the poorer classes, before they went to the long toil of their daily labour, knelt down and offered up a prayer. Neither was this confined to the poor, for at this early hour many ladies were seen in all the sincerity of the heart murmuring their orisons.

The young ladies were just up as the Admiral returned, he having seen all the sights; and nothing horrified Harriet more than learning from her maid that she had been in a Catholic church, and profaned even her shoes by being in so unhallowed a place.

With tears in her eyes, Harriet implored her father not to take Mary to any more churches; she considered it as plunging the poor girl into the deepest depths of perdition,

to which she had long since consigned poor Marling.

“Were *you* up and saying your prayers, Miss Impertinence, at six o’clock?” asked the Admiral, “were you ever in a cold church at that hour? No—and so I beg to tell you that if you wish to have the benefit of a good example, you will frequent a Catholic church at daylight.”

Again the travellers proceeded over the dull, dreary road, the Admiral wondering where the labourers lived who tilled the soil, for miles and miles were passed without any signs of habitations. Caroline was half disgusted at finding *la belle France* without exception the most ugly country she had ever seen; and Harriet, when awake, was employed reading a hymn, and, when asleep, dreaming of religion and the Reverend Isaac Snimens.

When they arrived at Beauvais for the night, Marling found that Mary waited to be assisted from the rumble, and that a young French waiter, attracted by her rosy face, had stepped forward to volunteer his services.

“Out of the way, *guardo*, and make way for a stationer,” said Marling, as he elbowed the little fellow from the rumble. “Every man to his station, and the cork to the fore-sheet. Now, Mary, my little cherub, put your left foot here — my eyes, what a neat boot! — there, face forward — now put your right one on the wheel — now put your arms round my neck and jump down. Why, you are as light as a feather—but I’m blessed if you ain’t the loveliest creature I ever saw.”

“Oh, dear, Mr. Marling, there’s Miss Harriet looking out of the window!”

“She’s looking at that French officer with the beard, my dear. Whenever you see a young lady so very particular about others, take my word for it, she is on the look-out for herself.”

At daylight, the Admiral again visited the cathedral, and again he was a witness to the many people who came in at that early hour, dipped their fingers in the holy water, made the sign of the cross, and, kneeling over a chair, bowed down their heads, and offered,

with true humility, their morning prayer. The ray of light which penetrated the painted window gave a solemn hue to the place, and for some minutes the Admiral stood still, fearing that the noise of his wooden leg might disturb the poor people. As they finished, they seemed to move away with cheerful countenances, and betook themselves to their several avocations.

“ We might alter for the better in England,” said the Admiral to Marling, “ if the churches were left open, and pious people admitted at all hours.”

“ I think, your honour, the books and the seats would soon be made prizes of by our light-fingered fellows ; they are not nice where they go for a haul ; besides, it ain’t fashionable to get up early ; and it’s vulgar to be seen out before the day’s warm.”

As the Admiral descended the steps of the cathedral, he remarked that most of the people saluted him, and, as he walked along, many, seeing the loss he had suffered in his limb, made way for him. -

“The devil is never so black as he is painted,” said the Admiral; “these people are civil, courteous, and kind.”

“No doubt, your honour, they know you were at Trafalgar, and they think it best to get out of the way before they are made to do so.”

“Well, this scene is worth looking at,” said the Admiral, as he heard a commissary of police *inviting* a “madame” to have the kindness to go to gaol.

“If monsieur,” said the woman, “would be so kind as to be seated whilst I arrange my toilette, I shall have the honour to accompany him.”

“I hope madame,” returned the commissary, “will not derange herself more than is necessary.”

“I hope monsieur does not find it cold?” said the lady, putting on a piece of wood.

“Madame is very obliging.”

And in five minutes the lady was on her way to the correctional police.

The next morning the party left that dirty town, Beauvais, and there was every prospect

that at the end of the third day's travelling the great distance of one hundred and fifty miles might be accomplished. Apartments had been taken for the Admiral in the Rue d'Anjou St. Honoré, to which place the postillions at St. Denis were desired to drive.

On entering Paris, an officer belonging to the city opened the door of the carriage, and inquired if they had any comestibles liable to duty ; and Marling, who overheard the transaction, took the liberty of giving vent to some expressions fitted more properly for the lower deck of a line-of-battle ship than for ladies' ears, which he finished by asking if monseer in the cocked hat thought an English admiral went to sea with cocks and hens in his cabin.

No sooner had they arrived than the unpacking began ; and as in this world we are accustomed to look out for ourselves first, so Miss Mary became rather clamorous to know what had become of her new bonnet.

“ It's in the well, my *she-cherub*,” said Marling.

“ My bonnet in the well, Mr. Marling ?”

“ Yes, my black-eyed beauty, here it is, stowed away so snugly that no one could steal it. Just see how I jammed it in between the Admiral’s writing-desk and Miss Clincher’s dressing-case ; it’s just made for dunnage or for filling up the chinks of the stowage, it bends so beautifully.”

As Mary received her bonnet, which was quite flattened, she betrayed so much temper in her looks, that Marling called out, “ Don’t stand so near the hatchway, Mary ; if one of those sparks get adrift from your eyes, you’ll blow up the magazine. Come, cheer up, my little angel, and I’ll have your mast-head covered with the finest cap in France. How I should like, if these long-tailed, thick-booted, frogs were not alongside, to kiss away that tear that’s put out the galley-fire of your eyes.”

The Admiral and his party being tired, retired early to bed ; and Miss Mary, after a very proper precaution from her young mistress, of the necessity of being ever on her guard in this wicked, demoralized country,

was dismissed to her chamber, with a positive order never again to go into a Catholic church, nor ever to hold any conversation with any one of that idolatrous worship ; and, having delivered herself of this charitable opinion, she said her prayers, and went to bed.

Mary, not daring to trust herself upon the public staircase alone, waited for Marling to escort her, and directly the Admiral was eased of one leg, and relieved the other of his weight, he told Marling to call him at daylight, and be ready himself to accompany him. Marling then returned to Mary.

“ I’m blessed,” said he to her, “ my little cherub, if I’m going to turn in yet. I’m going to see this great place by lamp-light.”

“ You’ll lose your way, and never get home again,” said she, tenderly.

“ Look here, my darling,” said the sailor, as he put his fingers upon two lumps on his forehead, “ that Mr. Macintosh, who was down at our house, told me I had the bump of locality, and that I could find my way like an Indian through a wood ; come along with

me, and I'll manage the sentry at the gangway—that chap who keeps the gate."

In spite of Mary's determination not to go, she was soon persuaded to accompany Marling, who, taking a thick stick of the Admiral's, went down; and the porter, seeing them go towards the porte-cochere, pulled the cordon, and Marling and Mary walked out, and, as Marling phrased it, started on a cruize.

"As long as we keep in a straight line," said Mary, "we never can lose our way."

"Avast heaving, my little angel, let me take the bearing and distance of the house, how the roadstead lies, and one or two landmarks, to lead us into the harbour again: ah, I see—now then, heave ahead, and save the tide."

On arriving at the bottom of the Rue D'Anjou, they came into the Faubourg St. Honoré. Marling took a good seamanlike observation of all around him, and being quite convinced he should know the narrow turning again, he turned to the left, and continued until he

came to the Rue Royale. It was a beautiful clear night, and the moon, in all its splendour, shone upon that magnificent and unrivalled building, the Madeleine.

“There’s a house,” said Marling; “it must be the king’s palace; let’s have a look at that.”

“Mind the turning, Mr. Marling,” said Mary.

“I’ve got the bearing—a wine-shop on with the centre of the palace; it’s just as clear as the Eddystone light-house in a dark night.”

Mary felt that confidence in her pilot which the confidence of the pilot himself always inspires.

“Never can miss this again, my angel; there’s another building opposite, you see, as if this one was looking in a glass and saw its own reflection.”

“How beautifully you do talk, Mr. Marling!” said Mary.

“Why, when I look in your clear eyes, my little dear, don’t I see myself, or a little

image of myself; and so, if this building could look into a looking-glass, wouldn't it see itself? let's go right round it. My eyes and limbs," said Marling, as he caught a full view of the Boulevards, "there's an illumination! we never can lose our way if we keep straight ahead."

It was now only ten o'clock, and many persons were walking about. Marling and his companion kept stopping at every shop, and, without thinking of the distance, got as far as the Rue Neuve Vivienne.

"We have come a long way, Mr. Marling," said Mary.

"We have been heaving-to, and backing, and filling every moment; when we steer a steady course homewards, we shall run over the ground in a minute; let's make another stretch ahead, and then we'll tack and fetch the harbour again."

This unfortunate advice being followed, they came to the Passage Panorama, and no persuasion on the part of the more prudent Mary could deter Marling from surveying

this narrow channel. It was crowded to excess, for it was just the time when one piece had finished at the Variétés, and between that and the commencement of another, half the audience walk in the passage.

“Here are shops, to be sure,” said Marling; “here’s everything, from a German flute to a penny whistle. Here’s caps, bonnets, stays—you might rig a seventy-four from stem to stern, and never go out of this dockyard.”

Towards the end of this passage several others branch off, and, in order to avoid the crowd, Marling took one to the left, without being aware of having so done, and after continuing, still observing the shops, he found himself suddenly in a large, broad, and populous street. This was the Rue Montmartre, and was mistaken by Mary for a continuation of the Boulevards. Still attracted by the shops, the time slipped unperceived away. Marling was charmed with his rosy-faced cherub, and Mary, having forgotten all the good advice of her young mistress, began to have some wish for the vanities of this life, and sighed as

she surveyed the enticing windows of a milliner, or the perfectly irresistible exhibition of a female shoemaker. They turned to the left on leaving the passage, and soon found themselves crossing a broad but now rather sombre street.

“ Well, I’m blessed, after all, Miss Mary, if I’m not out of my reckoning now,” said Marling ; “ the moon’s gone into a cloud, and the shops are beginning to be shut up, but here’s plenty of these companion-hatches on wheels, and in we’ll get, and make him steer us home.”

“ That’s a capital plan,” replied Mary, “ and the only difficulty I see in the business is that we cannot tell him where to go to.”

“ Then we’ll come to an anchor for the night, and get under weigh in the morning ; but we might as well try. Here ! navigator,” said Jack, “ open your hatchway and let’s in.”

The coachman readily understood this, and then asked in French where he was to drive to, saying, “ *Où allez vous, monsieur ?* ”

“ What do you take that to mean ? ” said Jack.

“ He’s asking us,” said Mary, “ what alley we live in.”

“ No, monseer,” said Marling, “ no—we must either stay or say we live in a Roo, and do ordinary ;”—which the rough tar thought came something near to the name he had heard Miss Caroline pronounce at Saint Denis —the *Rue D’Anjou Saint Honoré*.”

The Frenchman looked excessively knowing, got on his box, and, turning down the first street to the left, went through a variety of narrow places, dark as pitch, jolting the couple over gutters in the centre of the streets, and smacking his whip in the most unconcerned manner.

“ Oh, Mr. Marling,” said Mary, “ whatever shall I do ? we never came through these dark streets, and if we don’t find our way, and don’t get home, what will be said of me ? ”

“ They can only say, my cherub, that we rode out the night in a strange harbour.”

“ And that I was out all night with you ; oh ! if ever I get home again, I’ll say my prayers, and never leave the house again ; and, only think, if he should be going to cut our throats in these dark places !”

“ That’s the only thing I never should have thought of,” said Marling ; “ cut our throats, indeed ! I’m blessed if I would not shove him over the bows of his own craft, and give him for hay to his half-starved horse.”

“ Oh, Mr. Marling, I am so frightened ; I am sure I shall faint ”—and she grasped his hand.

“ Hold on like grim Death,” said the tar ; “ I’ll never desert you—why, my pretty creature, it’s no use fainting now, when nobody’s here to see it.”

“ I shall faint—I know I shall, Mr. Marling—all our family always fainted.”

“ What’s to be done if you do faint, Mary. Your young missus fainted, one day when that straight hair and long-teethed fellow got a-whispering to her about love and all that—what did you do for her ?”

“ Oh, I rubbed her forehead with cold water, placed her flat on her back, and unlaced—that is—oh, I can’t tell you, Mr. Marling—indeed I can’t—but perhaps the Frenchman knows.”

“ Why, I’m blessed, if he is not going to take us to sea, for he’s crossing a river; and now’s my time to pitch him into it.”

The nervous twitches which gave the sensitive Mary a kind of St. Vitus’s affection turned Marling from his hostile intention, and when he had somewhat soothed her agitation, and felt the violent palpitation of her heart, the citadin stopped.

“ He’s going to put us in the river; he is Marling—my own Marling—oh, do! do, dear John, protect me!”

“ I never was so happy in all my life,” said Marling; “ I feel my heart a-bumping about like a jolly-boat on a sand-bank—it makes me feel quite qualmish.”

“ Dear John, protect me!”

“ There, Mary, my darling, there’s a kiss for you they may hear on the other side of

the river. Now, Mr. Crappo, what do you want?"

"*Voila le Quai d'Orsay, monsieur.*"

The Frenchman had caught Marling's words of "stay or say," and making due allowance for the pronunciation, had safely conducted his fare to the above place.

"If I put him into the river," argued Marling, "the fellow's all bone, and will sink like a shot; and if I pound his head against the wheels, it will shake his senses, if he's got any, out of him. Now, Mary, my dear, don't faint yet, that's a darling; wait till we get home, and then you can do it more comfortably. Just look at this fellow; he is not bigger than a good-sized swab, and there is no one else here; so instead of giving him a swim, let's see if we can't get him to understand us. Monseer," said Jack, "you're a bad navigator, and considerably out of your reckoning. I dare say you never hove the log once, or took an observation of the moon."

"*Plait-il?*" said the coachman.

"No, that's nothing like it," said Jack. "Ru and do ordinary, that's the tune."

“No,” said Mary, “there was something about ‘honour me.’ ”

“Well, then,” said Marling, “let’s try him on that tack. Now, Crappo, pay attention, you lubberly rascal! You are no more fit to command a ship than I am to be bishop of marines. Ru and do honour me.”

“*Rue D’Anjou St. Honoré*,” said the Frenchman.

“That’s it, dear John; that’s it, I’ll take my bible oath of it.”

“Will you take your bible oath I’m your dear John? don’t faint now—what, you won’t answer me, and you hang your head down like a Marmoset monkey in a snow-storm—well, when I get alongside of you, I’ll ask again. That’s it,” said Marling, turning to the coachman; “ya, oui, si, yes; there’s four lingos, and you must be a Cornish miner if you don’t understand one. Shut us up in your cabouse monterivo, old boy; that’s it, ‘Ru and jou honory;’ start ahead and save the tide.”

Marling thought the coachman drove very

fast—Mary said it was quite remarkable how the time slipped away—and before they called out to “heave-to,” for Jack soon recognised the large building, and the various bearings and distances he had made, Mary understood that he had long wished to have a ship under his convoy, to sail through life with—that she was just the build of the vessel he admired—that he had saved plenty of money to stow the hold with a good cargo—and now, my little darling, here’s a kiss upon the book, and I’ll take my oath I love you.”

Jack was like all sailors when pleased—generous to a fault; he soon made out the large door, and handed the driver two dollars, as he called the five-franc pieces, and in return the Frenchman rang up the porter, who was a long time unbuttoning his eyes, got the door open, and a light in Mary’s hand, then wishing madame *bon soir*, took off his hat, and, shutting the gate, drove off.

“Good night, Mary,” said Marling, as they

got up close alongside the chimney-pots ; "if you are afraid, call me—and if you faint..."

"Get away with you, John, do ; there, good night"—and the affianced bride closed her doors.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Young Mopus was a man of considerable common sense; under all the flimsiness of his continental jargon there was a foundation of solid understanding. He had fallen into the effeminacy of the age, because it was a fashionable folly, and fashion leads many a man who feels more inclined to swim with the stream than to oppose it. Alice's advice had startled him, for, through her, Masterman had made his first acquaintance with Macintosh, and now her undisguised manner alarmed the young adventurer. Acting upon the impulse of the moment, he sought Masterman, saw him, related the conversation, and mentioned his determination to follow Macintosh—to see

the mine, make all inquiries, and, in the event of his not being satisfied, to force Macintosh to reimburse him for his shares, and to get out of the concern as speedily as possible. "I shall go to-morrow," he said, "and I shall be close at his heels."

"But why feel this useless alarm? the man is a person of character, evidently a shrewd observer; and moreover, one who, having examined the mines of South America, considers this one as far more lucrative. I scarcely thought you so variable as to be turned by the words of a woman, who, however brilliant in conversation, or accomplished in female acquirement, knows nothing at all about mines or their results."

"Be it so, Masterman; let us allow that I am variable, but you cannot deny that what I propose is common prudence. You have only Macintosh's representation of the fact—let me see that all he has said is true. I am fond of France; I like the country, the people, the language, the climate; so, while you are here calculating your fortune in a fog, I

will go and observe the progress of the accumulation, in a clearer atmosphere. I will dine with you to-day; after dinner we will resume our conversation, and I will endeavour to glean from Mrs. Masterman the reason why her opinion is so changed."

In the mean time Sir Dionysius had again been in town, on account of another application from the wife of the convict. She was anxious to accompany her husband to his future abode; and that request had been made and granted.

Very few letters passed between the Baronet and his son; and those were very pithy from the father in regard to advice, and very short from the son in acknowledging it.

It required no very observant eye to remark the melancholy which covered the bright features of Mrs. Masterman, as a dark veil obscures the brightest countenance: she was thoughtful, silent, reserved. In vain Mopus criticized the labours of the *chef de cuisine* with all the knowledge of a Frenchman; in vain he related some new anecdotes of the Grammont

Club, or imparted the freshest scandal from the immoral metropolis. She appeared not to listen ; she ate but little ; and occasionally a deep sigh escaped her. Mopus immediately believed that some of those delightful matrimonial differences had occurred ; and, with a great deal of self-complacency, imagined that Alice most seriously regretted having united herself to a golden calf, whilst she might have accepted himself, evidently, in his own opinion, a much more eligible companion for so clever and so accomplished a beauty. “ Poor dear girl,” he said to himself, “ repentance ever comes too late ;” and it is, as Byron says, “ A kind of income-tax laid on by fate.”

When Mopus mentioned his determination of following Macintosh to Paris, Alice seemed to brighten up.

“ If I can do any commissions for you, fair lady, I shall be honoured by being charged with them.”

“ You can,” said Alice, quickly ; “ I have a very particular letter which I will give you,

and before you go I hope I shall see you again."

" Oh ! I intend a very pleasant *tête-à-tête* with you this evening, for your husband has some affairs to arrange, and, with your permission, I will pass an hour in your society, which, if I may be imprudent enough to say so, seems to require some slight excitement."

Masterman was at heart a thorough miser, like his father; here and there he made an ostentatious display; was known to have given a beggar in the street half-a-crown, when he was quite certain such profuse charity was observed; his dinners were sumptuous when prepared for company; but indifferent and small when alone. Alarmed by the determination of Mopus to see with his own eyes the hole in the earth from which all this fortune was to emanate, he began to droop, lest the account should vary a little from that of Macintosh; and if so, by the hasty sale of so large an amount, a few other victims should wriggle from the slough, and leave him

alone to perish in it. Meantime, wholly absorbed in his own thoughts, he never remarked the alteration in his wife's conduct and appearance. She felt like the wretch over whose head the sword is suspended by a single hair ; or like him who knows that his residence is within the reach of a volcano's eruption. Sooner or later she knew the secret would be betrayed ; and quite in vain she turned her brilliant invention to ward off the blow. That morning she had searched every drawer left open in her husband's room, in order to destroy that one record of her folly. Again and again she had turned in her mind the last and most desperate resolution of *writing* to Macintosh, and of imploring him to save her. Then she thought of sending for her poor, old, grey-headed mother, and on her knees invoking forgiveness, and soliciting advice. Then again, as the Devil buoyed up her heart with pride, she thought her influence over her husband such, that she might make an avowal—an undisguised avowal of all—and yet retain his love. Poor Alice ! had she

but watched her husband narrowly, she would have known that money was *his* only idol; that the fair creature, who once was the object of his Pagan idolatry, had passed from his mind, as a presiding deity, and now only formed the chief ornament of his establishment. Still he had ever been kind to her, because he had never been thwarted; and he loved her as much as such a man can love any thing—a man whose whole existence is wasted in heaping up riches he has not the spirit to enjoy.

In the very whirlwind of her own apprehension, Alice could not reason; once she thought of confiding in Sir Dionysius, and being guided by his wisdom and experience. But her delicacy revolted against a discovery to any but of her own sex, and of those she had but a mother, whose strict sense of religion would steel her heart against one so fallen, and who would feel most poignantly the disgrace which must be entailed upon her.

In the midst of these conflicting thoughts, time ran on, and nothing had been done; the

secret was still safe, but it was entrusted to one with whom honour was but a word. She drew her breath with caution when she thought of his name, and whispered to herself, when she mentioned it. Alas, not unfrequently she weighed with a steady hand the chances, and debated whether wealth, station, character, and beauty, should be sacrificed entirely, when, by a surrender of some of the former, all the rest might be maintained; and as all the shame of the exposure became more evident, she thought that to forward it by a premature avowal was uncalled for and unnecessary. Still she held to her former resolve of saving her husband, if possible; and having summoned up all her courage, she resolved that night to try her power, in order that Mopus might be the bearer of the shares to Macintosh, and thus to test his sincerity.

“ I am afraid, Mr. Mopus, I shall be but a sorry companion this evening,” said Alice, as she met him in the drawing-room after dinner. “ I have been writing a letter to Miss Clincher, which, if you will deliver, you will oblige

me." She then added, with a faint smile, " You have more than once assured me I might rely upon your friendship."

" In that at least you shall never be deceived; and I wish it was possible that any thing could occur which would convince you of my sincerity."

" That can be tried at once," said Alice, quickly.

" Name in what manner I can be of use to you."

" By joining with me in imploring my husband to give up all speculations with Mr. Macintosh."

" It is strange, Mrs. Masterman, how agitated you seem on the mention of that man's name, and how very eager you are that we should relinquish a golden prospect proposed by him, of whom you gave, in my hearing, the fairest and most unblemished character."

" It is for that very reason. If this should fail, on whom will all the reproaches be lavished?—On me. If, by my husband's blind belief in all his golden visions, none should

be realized, and all his wealth become lost before it can be recovered, on whom will all the maledictions light but upon me, who, unfortunately, vouched for his honourable character?"

"And why now declare him the contrary?"

"That I did not do; but I have good reason to believe he has no money, and that this lure, by which you and my husband are already in his hands, may prove like that shown to the hawk to call him from his prey: it is tasted only until the bird is hoodwinked, and then instantly withdrawn."

"Love is blind, they say; yet, who would not remain a captive, if you but deigned to hold him?"

"This is no time for trivial compliments; you are involved to a great extent; your father would hardly forgive this violation of all his advice; and if I were the cause of my husband's ruin, never could I forgive myself."

"Willing, Mrs. Masterman, to serve you," said Mopus; "I will join my endeavours with yours."

“ I thank you sincerely and truly. You are about to follow up the plan I proposed—that of offering the shares to him. If he refuses to take them, the bubble will burst before either can be ruined. If he finds the money to pay for them, and takes them again, I confess even I shall entertain a different opinion. I presume this is the only speculation in which my husband is concerned.”

There was a smile upon the lips of Mopus as he said, “ The only one ! I verily believe, if Macintosh was to propose to tile the houses with oyster-shells, your husband would take shares in the speculation, so fully convinced is he, from *your* account, that he is in safe and honourable hands, and associated with a person as remarkable for his talent as he is for his keenness, probity, and discretion. If I understand you distinctly, you do not now attempt to throw any doubts upon his honour, or his veracity ; but you think, that as he has no money, he has been enticed himself into this speculation, and led more by his own

sanguine expectations than by his cool judgment."

Alice remained silent.

"Is it not so, Mrs. Masterman?" continued Mopus.

Still she was silent; and he then said, more seriously, as he took her hand in his—

"Answer me one question, Mrs. Masterman. Do you think Mr. Macintosh a strictly honourable man, and one in whom either yourself or your husband could rely; and would you place unbounded confidence in him, if you had trusted that to his keeping which might ruin you by its betrayal?"

"I cannot, and I will not, any longer deceive you," said Alice, as the blood suffused her cheeks: "be the consequence what it may, I will speak the truth. I believe him unworthy of any confidence—a man devoid of honour as he is of property—a mere adventurer, a plausible swindler, a reckless gambler." After a pause she added, solemnly—
"My God, I thank you for the strength you have given me, and the courage with which

you have inspired me, thus to speak the truth."

Having finished the sentence, she said, "It is done," and threw herself into a chair, and covered her face with her hands.

Mopus looked at her with dismay, so little had he anticipated this announcement, but he soon proceeded—

"You little know, dear madam, the extent of your husband's speculation, or the sums he has entrusted to this man for investments; and if such is the opinion you entertain of this Macintosh, I cannot account for the intimacy with which you have received him."

"That will be known before long; but let me trust in you as a friend; let me urge you at once to tell my husband what I should not have again the courage to repeat, and use all your exertions to draw him from the net in which, I fear, he is closely and strongly entangled. Go now, for my heart may fail me. I feel I have much to go through this night before I shall close my eyes—go."

Very warm was the debate below. Master-

man always viewed Mopus with slight envy, for his talents were of a far superior order, and his position in society much better ; whilst Mopus, although he envied Masterman his riches, always considered him a weak upstart. In vain did Mopus point out how appearances were against Macintosh, how little he was known, excepting as the chairman of the Certain Gain Life Assurance, where his name headed the list of others known not to possess a farthing, and who, in company with their worthy chairman, were speculating with other people's money, and maintained a doubtful reputation by a slight sprinkling of what never belonged to them.

“ I tell you,” said Masterman, “ my wife has known him for years ; the man is extremely clever, and his keenness of observation proverbial. I believe all the speculations good, and I am in no hurry to part from them.”

“ It appears your wife does know him,” said Mopus ; “ for, in persuading me to relinquish all my visionary schemes, she called

him a mere adventurer, a plausible swindler, and a reckless gambler. Those words are sufficient for me, and I will back out of the business, repay you, with many thanks, the money you have generously advanced, and be as contented as I can with my father's allowance."

"Do not give yourself the trouble then of going to Paris; I will take back the shares, and thus exonerate you from the debt."

"No," said Mopus, "to that I will never consent; you are already involved too deeply."

"This statement," resumed Masterman, "so ill accords with that of my wife to me, that I must have an explanation; and yet, a man who writes upon the currency question, and whose name is in every paper, would scarcely dare to thrust himself forward and court publicity, if his character were so easily to be assailed."

"Some of the greatest scoundrels that ever dared to walk the earth have blinded the public by their daring, and I suspect our hero is one of that number. It grows late; will

you let me say, if I feel satisfied that we are duped, that I hold your shares at the disposition of Macintosh? or just write me a slip of paper to that effect; you may rely upon my prudence."

"Take it, with all my heart," said Masterman; "how will you have it worded?"

"Merely, 'I hereby authorize Mr. Mopus to offer my shares of the Nantes Iron and Coal Mine to Mr. Macintosh; and, in the event of Mr. Macintosh's refusal to repurchase the said shares, I consider myself as freed from that clause in the agreement which obliges me to make the first offer to him, and shall feel at liberty to dispose of them as I may think proper: sign your name, date it, send for your servant to witness it, and give it me.'

All this being done, Mopus took his leave, merely saying, "You shall hear from me directly I have met our friend. Once more, good bye!"

"There goes the veriest weathercock that ever existed," said Masterman, as he disappeared, "and now I had better go to my wife."

This he did, and found her sitting in an easy chair in front of the fire; she held a small hand-screen to keep the fire from scorching her beautiful face, for, although she considered herself lost, irrecoverably lost, she thought it just as prudent to retain her beauty; no one knew better than Alice how much beauty in tears excites compassion and demands respect."

"I fear, Alice, my love, I am much, very much to blame for my late neglect, which, I trust, your usual goodness will forgive."

"I wish I could be as sure of yours, should I ask it, as you are of mine."

"Whenever you need it, Alice, fear not but that it shall be given as freely as you have given yours. I hear, from Mopus, that your opinion of Macintosh is changed. Now, my love," he continued, as he took her cold hand between his, "there ought to be no secrets between us, and, therefore, I am come to make you acquainted with the nature of some of my speculations, which, in consequence

of your high estimation of Macintosh, I have undertaken—you are silent."

"I await patiently to hear the extent of your ruin; I am prepared for the worst, but *I* shall suffer the most. Men lose the keen sense of disappointment in the occupations they are about to follow. Women, debarred from active life, have their sorrows ever fresh upon their minds."

"You alarm me, I confess," said Masterman; "tell me, Alice, why do you fear your friend Macintosh will play us false?"

"Because I know he has ever been a gambler; it was for this reason alone I was not permitted to marry him."

"Marry him!" said Masterman, starting up with wonder. "How is it this secret has been so well kept, that neither Mopus, in whose house you spent so many months, ever knew of this, nor did your friends the Admiral's daughters?—how long was this ago?"

"Leave, for the moment, the story of my loves, to learn the grounds of my suspicion. I believe he is now a rich man, from your

hastily embarking with a penniless adventurer. He will never make good his promises, or fulfil his contract. It will startle you when I tell you that I even doubt the existence of the mine at all."

"Still," interrupted Masterman, "this does not account for the sudden change of your opinion: it is but a few months ago, and he was the most honourable of men."

"Is not every thing answered," replied Alice, with some haste, "when I say he is, he was, and ever will be, a most desperate gamester?"

"You might, I think, have told me he was a gambler, and you might have also mentioned that he once had your affections, which is evident from your late words."

"Do me justice in this respect," interrupted Alice, "for whatever may be hereafter your opinion of me, I would stand fair, in your estimation, on every other point. I warned you against him, but you, with the usual haughtiness of your sex, dismissed me, like another Andromache, to my loom and dis-

taff, as a fitter occupation than that of conversing on subjects I did not understand. I felt hurt at this, and, debarred from your society, I have passed the bitter moments in believing I had lost your love, as I shall shortly lose your esteem."

Masterman sat down, silently brooding over the words of his wife, and not unfrequently summoning to his memory the large account of money which had slipped through his fingers, never, if her suspicions were true, to be clutched again. At last his mind struck upon the subject of his wife's former attachment.

"How long ago is it, Alice," said he, "that you first made acquaintance with Macintosh?"

"About six years," she replied.

"At that time you could only have been fourteen years of age."

As this question seemed to answer itself, Alice spared herself the chance of continuing the subject.

"When did he propose to marry you?" continued Masterman.

"Before I was fifteen."

“And your mother refused him?”

“Yes; I have before mentioned the reason. Had it been any other, I doubt if I should not have braved even her opposition, for, as you know, our home was not a quiet one; our different tastes led to a variety of quarrels, and the harsh word of an offended parent often fell upon my ear.”

“Then I presume it was your wish to leave your parent, more than any real affection for this gambler, which prompted you to accept him?”

“I was young, and he was the first man who ever paid me attention. I had often been told that I was beautiful; but even my own vanity and my own looking-glass failed to make me believe it; when *he* confirmed what others had said, I believed it; and, like a foolish child, impatient of control at home, listened to his deeds of adventurous enterprise one moment, and his flattery of my own charms the next. The girl who thus confides her ear to a cool, designing man, seldom escapes; he made me love him, and I accepted

him; my mother's refusal broke off the engagement."

"Did you see him afterwards?"

"Yes, frequently, and frequently he urged me to marry him, which I as often refused, on my mother's account. I believe him a most daring, adventurous man, such as we read of sometimes in novels, but seldom see in real life; his gambling, however, he never could relinquish. I have known him return from South America with much money, and a week after I have known him penniless."

"And this, then, is the reason you doubt him now?"

"Assuredly; who could have confidence in a man who cannot pass a gaming-house without rushing in, and with his own or the money of others speculating? Is it reasonable to suppose, that what has been the sin of a man for years, can be cured in a day?"

"Did you ever," said Masterman, overcoming all his respectful restraint, and almost gasping as he asked the question, "did you ever correspond with him?"

“ Yes, of course I did ; but now that you are willing to listen, let me urge you to withdraw from your engagements with this man. You find him clever, agreeable, observant, one who has travelled much, full of anecdote and with various accomplishments ; and, above all, plausible to an extent quite marvellous. With all these in one scale, remember to put in the other—the vices of the gambler—their recklessness, their subterfuges to obtain money, their disregard of all honour in connection with that touchstone of human nature ; and when you have done that, and become contented with your remaining wealth, you will be happier, and I shall have more of your company.”

When Masterman left the room, Alice thanked Heaven she had again, for some time, averted the blow, and retired to her bed with an aching heart and flushed cheek.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“ It is a precious dirty place, your honour,” said Marling ; “ and, although these are all fine houses, the proprietors have not thrown away much of their prize-money in making it easy to walk.”

“ They are a nation easily contented, Marling,” said the Admiral ; “ and more easily gulled and pleased than any nation under the sun. They say they are free ; and they have not the remotest idea of the word in its proper sense. Whenever they begin to be clamorous, a *féte* with some fire-works will turn their attention another way, and, by throwing the theatres open for a week, the whole population become the most enthusiastic supporters of the government. They are like their wood-

fires, eternally sparkling, crackling, and blazing, but giving and retaining no steady heat."

"They must all be great admirals or generals, your honour," said Marling; "for almost every other man in the streets has a piece of ribbon stuck to his buttonhole, and, not content with having it in his coat, he carries it on his great-coat, and sometimes his waistcoat."

"It is an easy way of gratifying childish vanity," said the Admiral. "The French run into one extreme, and we into the other; a Frenchman would put the ribbon on his dressing-gown, or his night-shirt, and wear it day and night, morning and evening; it is easily acquired and much over-valued. An Englishman must have seen much service, and got hard blows, before he can receive the distinction, which is given, comparatively speaking, with a niggardly hand, is well-earned, and well-merited; but the person on whom this honour is conferred, content with having deservedly obtained it, seldom wears it of an evening, and never of a morning. Here it

becomes absurd, from the people who have it. Stockbrokers and fiddlers, composers of songs and writers of novels, bankers, brokers, tradesmen, painters, daubers, and squallers, are all bedizened with a penn'orth of ribbon ; making the order insignificant and valueless, since the man who obtains it in battle, and who perils his life, has no greater reward than the stockbroker or the fiddler, who, because the one exchanges and the other creates notes, have a similar distinction."

"I'm blessed," said Jack, "if I don't think they must have served them out of the queen's cupboard to every blessed individual in the whole town."

"If they do so to those who are near the throne, they do not always do it to others who fight hard. It is but the other day that a French officer served gallantly in Africa, was wounded in several actions, and faced many dangers of climate, many wants, and many privations ; the hope of getting this flimsy ribbon still animated him, and in one attack, where he led the forlorn hope, he was

seriously wounded ; he was brought back to Algiers, and no hopes were entertained of his recovery. At last he wasted away, and death became inevitable. Still he clung to life, with a hope that before he died he might obtain the Legion of Honour. As he lay extended on his couch, the film of death darkening his eye, his pulse failing, his cheeks livid, the colonel of the regiment entered the room, bearing a piece of ribbon ; the dying man called back animation sufficient to behold the great gift for which he had so often bled, and, lifting his hands, died with a smile of delight. It is well for the sovereign who can find people to die for so trivial and so common a reward."

"I heard tell, your honour, that the English navy were to have medals."

"Very likely, Marling ; we are all children, and sailors are the largest of the set ; but I very much doubt if Jack gets on shore at Common Hard, or Point, without any money in his pockets, if he would not sell the thing for a glass of grog."

"In Russia, your honour, they wear five or

six at a time, hung in a row, like cherries on a stick ; in Sweden every man carries on his coat a large dab of tin, big enough to make into a hand-basin ; and in Austria, and Prussia, and Germany, he must be a sleepy fellow, or a bad scavenger, who has not picked up something of the kind."

"The emperor understood his people well," said the Admiral, "when he sacrificed the unlucky by millions, for his own power, and satisfied the survivors by such a twopenny reward. This is a fine street, Marling ; and that's a fine building."

"It looks, your honour, very well by moonlight."

"How do you know that?"

"Because, your honour, I always remarked in a fleet that a large ship looked larger and better in the moon's than it did in the sun's light ; and Mary, when she saw this last night —(my eye ! have not I let the cat out of the bag now !" said Marling to himself, as he stopped suddenly short)....

The Admiral whistled rather a gay tune,

and gave such a look at Marling that he began to think the sooner he made a clear deck of his conscience the better.

“ You and Mary will make two great donkeys of yourselves, I can see,” said the Admiral. “ I knew very well that if an old sailor got alongside of a young craft in the close rumble of a travelling carriage, some little love would go on.”

“ Yes, your honour, we did a bit of love—and we are agreed to sail together until death takes one and leaves the other to ride out the gale at single anchor.”

“ Or to get moored again about a month afterwards. Well, I dare say you’ll do just as well as the rest.”

The Admiral now took a survey of the open space where the Luxor column now replaces the republican guillotine, and while admiring the splendours of that unrivalled spot, he became more than usually excited, kept twirling and twisting on his wooden leg, until, giving an impetus which would have set an opera-dancer spinning like a teetotum, he lost his balance, and fell down.

Marling did not see the fall ; but a French gentleman, with the usual red ribbon on the great coat, proffered his assistance, and placed the Admiral on his perpendicular again. He stammered out his thanks in English, and the Frenchman, breaking into broken English, expressed how happy he was thus to have been enabled to render such trifling service to an officer who, *sans doute*, had lost his leg in the service of his country.

As the Admiral had not only lost one leg, but had now sprung its substitute, it was requisite to get a *fiacre* to convey him home. Marling did not know where to find one, and could not make the coachman understand if he did ; so, with the ready civility of a gentleman, the stranger himself went for one ; whilst the Admiral, leaning on Marling, gave vent to his feelings, and a thousand times wished himself again in England, where he had walked for twenty years without ever tumbling down.

The Frenchman, on his return, introduced himself as the Marquis de Pasdeterre, and, as the Admiral was in some pain from the fall,

the nobleman requested the honour of being allowed to see the gallant officer safe to his hotel; which being readily accorded, he took his seat by the side of his new acquaintance, whilst Marling sat opposite to the Admiral, to support his fractured leg.

The marquis was about thirty in appearance —wore those remnants of barbarism, mustachios, and possessed a beard which would have been esteemed even by a Mahomedan. He was evidently one of the regenerated, under the name of *La Nouvelle France*. He was assiduous to please, particularly attentive, and, from his unceasing chatter in broken English, attracted the notice of Marling, who grumbled out :

“A cursed deal too civil by half! Never knew a Frenchman in my life, when he was civil, that did not intend to take care of himself.”

The Admiral, having been placed on a sofa in his drawing-room, had soon his two daughters by his side; and Caroline, although a girl not very remarkable in England, was an ob-

ject of admiration amongst the ugliest nation in Europe. The freshness of an English complexion, instead of the greasy olive colour of the French, seemed wonderfully to attract the marquis, who instantly began a tirade of compliments, declaratory of his envy of the Admiral who, in sickness, could be watched and attended by such angelic creatures.

A marquis in England is as yet somebody ; but a marquis in France, in the good days of regeneration, may very possibly be the son of an obscure grocer in one of the provinces. Any man may fit himself out with a title, put it on his card, clap a coronet over it, and half those on whom it is left, having themselves usurped the same honours, receive the name as genuine, and in the company of English people invariably call each other Monsieur le Marquis, &c.

Foreign tourists, in England, have all remarked the subserviency of the middling to the aristocratic classes ; and there can be no question that the observation is correct. This arises from the unbroken circle which sur-

rounds this noble throng; and although the barrier has been crossed by a few, and although some of the weaker sex have overleapt the boundary, to join the greedy aspirants for honours outside, yet still it remains a select society, varying its ramifications amongst itself, but sternly forbidding the familiar intertwining with those of humbler growth. In France, society is more easy of access. The sterling character of a gentleman is sufficient to warrant a proper reception; the abolition of the hereditary rank, the pervading spirit of equality, the detestation of the right of primogeniture, all tend to break down any exclusive barrier, and not even the discreet selection of the Faubourg St. Germain can remain any longer uncontaminated from the revolutionary nobility, who, by raising the lower order, have humbled themselves.

“As I’m alive,” said Harriet, “it is a marquis; and a highly distinguished one, no doubt, as he has two red ribbons, and a coronet on his gold-headed cane.”

“And,” said Caroline, taking up the card,

“ here is another coronet. How very fortunate papa broke his wooden leg !”

The Admiral was at an age when, if the framework of the vessel gets a shake from a fall, the little that remains time seldom puts firmly together again. He was predisposed to quietude, and the slight fever which followed increased a somewhat irritable temper. A strange noise, too, like an elephant with an asthma, which seemed to come from the next house, afforded the Admiral but little consolation, especially when he heard it arose from a small steam-engine adjoining his apartment. The said steam was used to work a dozen machines at stated intervals, and was now working a pair of bellows for an armourer’s forge.

“ This is what they are pleased to call a quiet apartment,” said the Admiral, with a sigh. “ That moan is worse than the groan of pain ; it worries, it annoys me. Here, Marling, take the sofa to the next room, and perhaps I may avoid this nuisance.”

Scarcely had the invalid again reclined

upon his couch, and nearly fallen asleep, when his bell rang violently. Marling stood by his side.

“What’s that devil’s tattoo over my head?” he began; “why it’s a thousand times worse than the hollow noise of the bellows.”

Marling, who had learnt to obey, made inquiries, and discovered that directly over the Admiral’s bed-room was an apartment let to a dancing-master, who likewise undertook the fashionable branch of education called gymnastics. At the present moment he had only ten boys, who were placed in line, and who were, to use a military phrase, “marking time;” and, as there were no carpets, the thick heels of these juvenile mili-taires made a very pleasant sound, which the Admiral had designated by the term of “devil’s tattoo.”

“Roll me back again, Marling,” cried the Admiral; “the rooms must be changed. I must be put in that destined for my youngest daughter. Oh, for the quiet of my own house again!—fool that I was ever to leave it!—there, that will do—don’t shake the sofa.”

“If your honour could get a wink of sleep, I think you would be better.”

“What’s this new noise, Marling?” cried the Admiral, impatiently. “Go, directly, and tell the fellow overhead to heave-to for an hour or so.”

“It’s only three youngsters, your honour,” said Marling, on his return; “they’re playing marbles. The dancing-master has gone out, and, for fear they should get into mischief, he left them to skylark a little. But they are mighty polite, and send their compliments and say, if the marbles disturb your honour, they will play humming-tops instead.”

Scarcely had Marling delivered his message than the strangest of all conceivable noises, which no language can convey on paper, began; it seemed to run over the whole room, varying in intensity as to sound. At one time the noise appeared like fifty thousand bees swarming; then changing into somewhat resembling a rush of cockroaches, it afterwards died away in a softer sound, and gave one convulsive rattle (like a snake of that order),

before it subsided altogether. This would have disturbed the equanimity of many a better temper than that of the Admiral. It was evident that no room in the apartment was freed from this vexatious annoyance; for over Caroline's was the solitary chamber of a young teacher of the piano, who, having obtained a desperate pupil at about a franc an hour, had given up her musical instrument to the determined crush of her thumping friend. The young lady seemed resolved to have the value of her twenty sous in sound; and no sooner had she vacated the chair, than the teacher, in order to keep her hand in, ran over the scales with most patient and persevering re-expansion, and only gave over the monitory when another twenty sous lady took a lesson.

The concierge was called. He, poor fellow, is like the conductor of an omnibus, and bears all complaints, receives all abuses, and with the patience and silence of that long-nosed animal, the donkey, seems to carry the load thus heaped upon him, without any indication of annoyance.

He “could not help it—before monsieur took the apartments he occupied, these people existed—monsieur came to the nuisance, not the nuisance to monsieur—and as every man’s apartment was his own castle, he could not intrude to stop the noise. As for the pianiste, the payment of her rent depended upon the very sounds so inharmonious to the ears of the Admiral.”

“Then I must grin and bear it ; for I have paid in advance ; and must give a month’s notice before I can leave.”

“ You will get accustomed to it, my dear papa,” said Harriet. “ I have heard you say that a salute of twenty-one guns has been fired over your head without awaking you : by to-morrow ‘you will have forgotten this trifling annoyance.’ ”

So far, this second day in Paris had gone very badly indeed. The only exception to the run of disasters was the fortunate circumstance of the Marquis de Pasdeterre’s acquaintance, which was a sure advance into French society ; and it was quite refreshing to the

young ladies to hear voluminous compliments. He also volunteered to procure tickets to see every palace and every sight in Paris.

His civility was cordially welcomed, and the next day he made his appearance with a variety of these orders—which may be obtained by any man who will take the trouble to write for them.

Although Harriet Clincher was exceedingly devout, and repudiated the least advance to amusements which congregated people together, she had no objection to walk on the Boulevards, and see the gay promenades so much frequented by this mirth-loving nation; neither did it appear wrong in her eyes to visit any palace or place of industry. The young ladies, therefore, with Marling and Mary bringing up the rear, walked out, attended by the Marquis, who kept at a respectful distance, and who took off his hat to every carriage in which he perceived a lady who happened to look the other way.

Several things were required by the young ladies, and a shop with fixed prices was

selected for the first purchases. On a sum being named as the price, the ladies were rather astonished at finding their friend propose exactly the half. On the first purchase being made, it so happened that neither of the ladies had anything but gold. The Marquis instantly changed it, paid the sum required, and returned the rest, by which manœuvre he secured about six sous for himself, that being about the agio on a sovereign.

“ Well,” said Marling to his companion, “ one learns French by paying attention. You see that ‘ *prix fixe*’ means half-price.”

Caroline Clincher was quick enough in observing that the renowned French civility consisted more in words than deeds, and that its compliments were indiscriminately lavished on the woman of sixty and the fresh-coloured blooming beauty of sixteen; and that even in the quarrels of the lowest of the people the *convenances* of society were strictly upheld; the famed *politesse* of the nation preserved its equilibrium; and after being initiated a little into French street usages, some of which

shocked their English delicacy not a little, the Marquis conducted them home, and took his leave at the door.

In the saloon they found Mr. Macintosh, quietly awaiting their arrival, and who, having heard that the Admiral was asleep in his bed, had nearly lolled himself into the same quiescent state on the sofa.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Caroline, on addressing Macintosh, instantly observed an anxiety of manner about him. He was quick in his interrogations about the French Marquis; for, being a swindler himself, he was the best to discover the cheatery in others. Macintosh had come over to Paris for two reasons; the one to captivate Caroline—the other to extract money from more victims. He had with him a brother, whom he had appointed, with the comfortable salary of eight hundred a year, to the hole in the earth, near which he hoped himself to find a retreat, should the thunder burst over him before he was prepared for the shock. He said he had lately seen Alice Masterman—

spoke warmly of the happiness of virtuous love—and, as Harriet was present, he lauded those who, in all the splendour of riches, were not unmindful of religious duties. He implied that a great change had taken place in Alice, that she had become very strict, and found her reward for absenting herself from the world in the prospect of future happiness in that which was to come.

The Admiral, who considered himself much indebted to Macintosh for the kind manner in which he had interested himself about his son, expressed a wish to see him; and the Lothario tore himself from his future speculation, with an expression of the sentence—“Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.” And as he expressed his wish that he might be fortunate enough to find the ladies in the salon on his return, he gave an unutterable look, and pumped up a deep sigh.

The Admiral’s ears seemed galvanised as he listened to the glowing details of illimitable riches; the great security given by the

connection with Masterman seemed to make security doubly sure; and when, by a slight forgetfulness, the name of the Admiral's old friend, Sir Dionysius Mopus, was mentioned, it filled him with expectant rapture.

“ As an investment for my daughter, Mr. Macintosh, what think you of that?”

“ Why, it depends of course upon the magnitude of her fortune. You are aware, that, in the richest mines of Peru, occasionally a vein is exhausted, and sometimes lost, before a new one is worked to advantage. Then the payments of such large interests as thirty or forty per cent., which is about my expectation of the present concern, may perhaps get as low as twenty, nay, fifteen, and subject those who invest but smally to a great diminution of income.”

“ Her fortune is considerable; she has about fifteen thousand pounds of her own, besides what she may expect when this old hulk of mine is laid up in ordinary in Gravesend Reach.”

“ It would be for her a most eligible, safe,

and profitable investment; but I fear it can hardly be done now. The shares have been sold in England at a great premium, and I was hurried out of the country from the ceaseless annoyance of people who were forcing their money upon me, and leaving me to invest it, and supply them at my leisure with the necessary documents. Masterman will not give up one share even to his best friend, and Mopus is clamorous for more. It is one of those few things called 'certainties': if a man wants to be ruined, let him buy a patent, or take shares in a new newspaper; but when he is guided by discretion, and knows the results of a mine, he is, to use a familiar expression, as safe as the church, and as certain of riches."

"I hardly know how, my dear sir," said the Admiral, "to express my thanks to you for more than one or two acts of great kindness; and if I could be allowed to row in the same boat with my friends through your instrumentality, I should be under an additional obligation. Suppose you dine here to-day,

and afterwards we shall be able to talk over this business."

"I am glad to see you so much altered for the better, Admiral: the hurt occasioned from your fall will soon pass away, and a little quiet and sleep quite restore you."

"Quiet and sleep!" said the Admiral; "listen to the precious jumble of sounds which would drive an anchorwright from the foundry at Portsmouth half mad. How can a man sleep with a school of boys either dancing, playing leap-frog, beating time, playing marbles or humming-tops, over head, with an elephant with an asthma alongside, a blacksmith within hail, and an infernal grocer pounding cocoa underneath? The doctor was right, when he said that I should be distracted from other subjects, abroad. I believe I was mad when I came, for I am already raving to return."

Macintosh laughed at all the Admiral's jokes, commiserated him upon all his misfortunes, listened to his words as if emanating from a prophet, and only hazarding

a remark under a kind of interrogation as to if he was right in his conjectures.

Macintosh rubbed his hands with delight as he walked to his hotel. If he could get the money without the girl, it was a better speculation than being hampered with a wife, and then he could better carry out his revenge against Alice. Strange it was that he almost loved her, because she was adverse to him, and in that disappointment was the spring of his revenge.

Macintosh's presence was not at all unwelcome to Caroline; whilst Harriet, who now saw in her almost affianced Mr. Snimens but a poor pale-faced lanky-haired apology for a man, felt almost sure that the Marquis de Pasdeterre was the handsomest man she had ever seen.

The plainest man, whose countenance is illuminated by wit, and whose intellectual features brighten as he relates his anecdotes, has a hundred times the advantage in love over a silly fellow, whose inanimate eyes and curled whiskers constitute his principal charm.

Macintosh was not only handsome but was shrewd; he could stoop to conquer; he could listen with coolness to attacks upon himself; and he knew how certain was success if his temper was under control: he watched every look, and seized the exact moment in pouncing on his victim. He knew that the Admiral was coming to his lure, and he resolved to let him precipitate himself into the net. His plan varied as circumstances varied; he thought the connexion with the Admiral's family advantageous for future operations, and he questioned if it would not be better to make the girl his wife; but he was quite sure it was requisite to obtain her money. Nevertheless, with the most studied care Macintosh avoided the subject. He spoke of scenes in distant countries, and, seeing Caroline was of a romantic turn, he poured forth a torrent of poetic imagination on the magnificent scenery of South America.

Even the Admiral lost sight of his speculation in listening to Macintosh's vivid descriptions; and it was not until late in the

evening, when Harriet checked the adventurer in his relation of a ghost story, as being highly irreligious and improper, that the sanguine Admiral ventured on the subject. Macintosh was beautifully indifferent; “ it would cost him some time to arrange;” but promising however to keep the Admiral’s wish ever present in his mind, he advanced a step up the ladder of familiarity, by shaking Caroline’s rather tremulous hand, and, recommending the Admiral to seek repose, made that consideration an excuse for his early withdrawal.

With the conclusion of the Admiral’s excitement began his irritability, and he went to his bed in one of those sweet humours into which men occasionally fall after they have passed their sixtieth year, and for which irritability the doctors have discovered many very excellent reasons.

That night Harriet was quite satisfied that, although Macintosh was an entertaining man, the Marquis de Pasdeterre was a much more useful one; and Caroline, with a warm heart,

and with blood excited by the clear atmosphere of France, slept soundly, and almost heard herself called by the name of the man with whom she had tumbled headlong into love.

Such was the state of all parties, when the Admiral rang his bell in the morning, and for the first time for years gave a quarter-deck curse upon Marling's tardiness.

“What the devil is all this?” said the fretful man. “There must be an *eineute*, as these fellows call a mutiny: did one ever hear such a clatter of infernal horns!”

This sudden ebullition was occasioned by four young gentlemen, who were practising on as many horns a kind of tune used with the stag-hounds, and which seems in France the chief accomplishment of a good huntsman.

No plague since those of Egypt could be much worse than this. No sooner was one done than another began. The *Fanfare de Chasse* gave way to the *Fanfare Royale*; then came the *Fanfare Wagram*, then the

Fanfare Greffhule, and, when these and a dozen others were practised, the "*Bien Aller*," "*à l'eau*," "*la prise*," "*Bon soir*," resounded in horrible turbulence. Between the slight relaxation of the hornblowers to recover breath, the elephant's painful inhalation was heard; the blacksmith hammered and sang; the children danced; the music-lady thumped; the gymnasium was in full force; and the porter's daughter, a girl of fourteen years of age, screamed the "*Souvenir*" from the *Pré aux Clercs*, occasionally varying the air for the *Barcarolle* in Massaniello.

At the same time, Hogarth's enraged musician was never assailed by half the discordant cries which came from the venders of goods in the streets below the poor Admiral's window. "*Hu—Vitrier!*" the first word being given as the result of a powerful inhalation, which is collected in all its force to thunder out the last word. "*Marchand d'habits*," roared another *Monsieur*, willing to make himself heard; whilst a vagabond, with a parcel of handkerchiefs hanging from his

arm, bellowed, “*Dix sous le mouchoir.*” Anon came an old woman, with a shrill voice, rolling a platform on wheels, with hundreds of articles jingling thereon—“*à vingt cinq sous—à vingt cinq sous.*” “*Parapluie—pluie—pluie*”—called an old umbrella man. “*Chapeau à vendre, voila là Marchande de Chiffon,*” screamed a hag, with broken voice; whilst a deeper sound thundered, “*Vielles Bouteilles à vendre.*” In these confusions of noises, one towered above the rest; it was a chimney-sweep—“*àu to ba,*” (as it is pronounced for “*Haut en bas,*”) was rapidly repeated; whilst the lucky fellow who had some mackarel to sell trotted along at a brisk rate, shouting, “*il arrive—il arrive.*” A little girl, whose shrill voicee might have been heard half a mile, squeaked out, “*Mes petites radis rose un sous la botte, un sous la botte;*” whilst the last note in this wild chorus was sung by a cracked voice, calling “*Limande à frire, à frire.*”

Never since the confusion of tongues was there a greater confusion of noises, from

which there was no retreat. Every room looked upon the street ; and, during the night, the Admiral had started a dozen times, as the huge door of the house was banged by some *soirée*-going youth, who would have considered it loss of life to have stopped long enough between the street and his bed to shut the door quietly.

It was quite evident to the daughters, that the extreme irritation would lead to some very serious consequences. The Admiral was fretful, nervous, melancholy ; and the only person who seemed at all to relieve him of his splenetic humour was poor Marling, whose marriage with Mary was thus betrayed to Harriet. The Admiral indulged in all sorts of abuse against his old shipmate, who never replied a word, but kept his eyes fixed on one of the heroes of Trafalgar, inwardly thinking that Paris would be illuminated for joy when it was known that he was dead.

“ Marling, you fool,” said the Admiral, “ you are worse off than I am ; for I am going to die and escape all torments, whilst

you are going to be married and multiply yours."

At last, however, the doctor arrived ; and the Admiral being rendered somewhat sleepy by a powerful narcotic, the daughters retired to the saloon, and there was the Marquis de Pasdeterre, who had brought with him a quantity more tickets to see various "sights" of Paris. The ladies, he said, were ever present to him ; he had exerted all his powerful influence to give them some gratification, and he should be delighted to volunteer his escort.

It is marvellous how very sensitive is the nose of a French *chevalier d'industrie* in his pursuit of money ; and it is more marvellous how easily English women are gulled by trifling and insignificant civilities ; the compliments which a wordy Frenchman pours forth in all the heartlessness of a studied lesson are believed by them to emanate from a warm heart.

The Marquis evidently attached himself in the first instance to Caroline ; but Harriet's

manner induced him to believe her an easier conquest; and as money in France is equally divided amongst the children, he thought the charms of person a very indifferent point. He, therefore, devoted himself with earnestness to secure the affections of the latter lady.

For propriety's sake, Mary attended both the young ladies in their walk; and, from the time of their exit to their entry, the Marquis had poured the strong tide of flattery, and had made Harriet's boarding-school French the medium by which he conveyed to her mind some sentiments to which her ears had until now been a stranger. He ridiculed every opposition to a national custom, as a prejudice; and declared all prejudice the result of ignorance wedded to superstition. But he inculcated his notions with such a profusion of words, that the lady only imbibed the meaning, divesting it entirely of its rudeness. “From lips like his what precepts failed to move!” Harriet listened with all the avidity of a young unsuspecting girl, and the

Marquis gained her confidence before he spoke of love.

On the arrival of Mopus in France, he proceeded instantly to Nantes. The only fault in his character was foppery. He had sufficient talent to master any difficulty; and he was clear-sighted enough to understand that, by his visiting the mine himself, and by getting information in the neighbourhood, he would be better able to judge if there was a chance of success. The bubble could not well burst in so short a time; and he was resolved to satisfy his mind thoroughly before he began to act.

At Nantes Mopus met the brother of Macintosh, to whom he was cautious not to make himself known. He learnt that the mine had originally been bought by Macintosh for ten thousand pounds, a sum far beyond its value; that Macintosh had generously sold it to the company for fifty thousand pounds, out of which sum he paid the original ten; that it never yielded much, and now yielded less; and that the plan adopted by the ad-

venturer was to frighten the shareholders as to their liabilities, whilst he was safe, and his brother provided for.

When the mind receives a sudden shock from disappointed hopes, in many cases the victim becomes stupified and remains inactive. It was not so with Mopus. He looked calmly on his probable ruin, and resolved to unmask the adventurer, and, if possible, to save something for Masterman. Having made himself thoroughly master of his subject, he took the *malle-poste*, and returned to Paris about three weeks after Macintosh's arrival in the capital. These three weeks had been profitably employed. The money for the Admiral's purchase was now realized, and was at the banker's, ready to be transferred to the distributor of shares; but the excessive illness of the veteran, his extreme irritability, and his occasional flightiness of manner, rendered the most absolute quiet necessary. Meantime, from some other of his victims, Macintosh had collected sufficient to keep up a good appearance; he had spent

hours and hours with Caroline, and she had not been a dull listener. Othello is made to win Desdemona by the recapitulation of his deeds of valour; so a fairer face, a manlier form, practising the same line, had won the confidence, the esteem, nay, the love of the poor, weak girl; and already had she listened to the bright prospect of a happy union—the delight of roaming the world with one so conversant in its ways and so observant as to its customs. All she had in the world she generously offered to the man she loved; she hated the idea of a settlement—catching blindly at his statement, that it was a suspicion upon the honour of the man she loved. All the immense security; all the provision for children, was overlooked; and, in the headstrong confidence of a girl in love, she clung to his opinions and subjected herself to his wishes.

The Marquis de Pasdeterre now came forward, and, after a cautious display of modesty, tremblingly offered his hand.

Harriet allowed her hand to remain in that

of the *soi-disant* Marquis, and, when the blushing girl had recovered sufficient fortitude to speak, she declared her only objection was to his religion.

“Would you have me,” said Pasdeterre, “be a Catholic when you are a Protestant?”

“No! indeed I would not. Are you really, truly, a Protestant?”

“As firm in that creed as yourself. I sought my future partner in life amongst those of my own profession. This obstacle removed, I may call my Harriet mine.”

The blushing girl held down her head, and gently returned the warm pressure of her lover’s hand.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

In the state of things described in the last chapter, Mopus arrived at Paris on his return from Nantes ; having quite forgotten the letter entrusted to his care, and which he found by chance in his pocket. From the moment of Mopus's departure, Alice seemed somewhat to recover her spirits ; she had wound up her mind to act justly and honourably ; however deep the deception she had practised, she resolved to make all the reparation in her power ; and, however dark and lowering the horizon appeared, she watched with a firm eye the approaching storm, resigning herself to her inevitable fate. It is said the human heart can only love once. If so, Alice never

could love her husband, since her first and fatal love was for another; but she could repent of that love and its evil consequences; and her vigorous mind set about to resume its healthy action.

The first week passed after Mopus's departure, and her quick eye could detect no tidings which alarmed her, although she saw one or two letters in Macintosh's handwriting. The blow would not come openly; that she knew; but she wondered at the delay. The first hint of her infidelity had been given; and at times she saw the poison working in her husband's mind. She never dared approach the subject; and he, equally fearful of some impending calamity, allowed the venom of jealousy silently and gradually to steal over him. Hundreds of times had he read the few lines; as often had he wondered who could have placed the paper there, and why the shaft once sped had not been repeated.

Day after day came and went; ten had elapsed, and yet no tidings had reached Masterman from Mopus. He believed the Baro-

net's gay son to be absorbed in the dissipation of the French capital, and in that vortex of pleasure to have forgotten the object of his journey; and, strange as it may appear, he rather rejoiced at the supposed neglect, comforting himself with the old saying, that no news was good news; for Masterman was that kind of man who dared not look his difficulties in the face, and was happy when they never intruded themselves.

The post of the fourteenth day from Mopus's departure brought a letter with the Nantes mark upon it, which Alice instantly recognised as his handwriting. A gloom had hung over the breakfast-table, for that morning Masterman had again read the fatal slip of paper, which had aroused anew all his jealous fears and misgivings.

“ You seem acquainted with Mopus's handwriting,” said he to his wife with an air of suspicion. “ Have you ever corresponded with him ? ”

“ You know he made me an offer of marriage,” replied she, “ in a letter, which of course I answered.”

“ And you were not his to command, I presume,” said the husband, with a significant look.

The blood forsook her cheeks; her eyes, bright before, seemed now suddenly clouded; and the blush of guilt which suffused her face could not be either controlled or checked. But Masterman, though he had directed this envenomed shaft, had not looked to see if it had struck the mark, and with nervous hesitation he proceeded to open the despatch.

It was short, and ran thus—“ The whole thing is a bubble, which fortunately as yet has not burst. I am off to Paris, where that swindling vagabond still remains. In a few days you shall hear what I can save from the wreck, and perhaps you will be kind enough to erect a monument, either to myself or my antagonist, in Père la Chaise.”

“ This is the result of your recommendation, Alice,” said Masterman; “ this is the man you introduced to me, and this the person whom, after I had involved myself deeply, you proclaim as an adventurer. I will not

upbraid you ; you will feel the fall more than I shall ; it is not two years since I inherited an immense fortune, and at this moment I am ruined."

" Ruined !" exclaimed Alice.

" Ruined ! Detesting the English securities because they yielded so little interest, I placed money in every foreign stock which yielded a greater return. Spain is bankrupt, Portugal is bankrupt, America is bankrupt ; that last has overwhelmed me. I still clung to the hope that this mine might retrieve me a little : alas ! even here I am disappointed. Before long this house and all it contains must be sold ; and how will you bear the bitter frown of poverty ? No longer will you be courted and caressed — those who are poor are always despised, or, what is more crushing, pitied."

" It cannot be, Masterman," replied Alice ; " our marriage settlement alone is sufficient to maintain us in affluence abroad ; and although all these speculations have failed, they are still worth something. With you I am contented, whatever may be our fortune."

“ You are a dear, generous girl, Alice, and all your spirit and courage I know will rise with the necessity for it. I doubt our marriage settlement, for Macintosh was the man named by you, and the other trustee is dead : his name has never been replaced ; if, therefore, this man is the scoundrel even you imagine him now to be — his character having thus suddenly altered in your estimation — he may have availed himself of the power being solely in his hands, and thus our last resource may fail. But, if I could restore the quiet of my mind — if I could feel that you were solely, wholly mine, I could bear even this reverse of fortune, and live in cheerfulness and poverty with you.”

The tears started from the burning eyes of Alice : she did not dare to ask if he doubted her ; she felt how unutterably guilty she was, and how certainly such love as her husband’s would turn to the most bitter hatred and revenge.

“ Yes, Alice,” he continued, “ when I first saw you some years ago, when poverty was

my companion, and I had grown accustomed to it, I loved you. At that time I knew I could not expect to win the prize that all coveted: I felt myself without a chance, without a hope, of it. But, when I became a rich man, that love which I had for a time suppressed burst forth again with redoubled fury, and I hastened to throw myself and it at your feet. Now I am doomed to return to that condition which I thought I had escaped; and still, if I were as confident of your affections as I am convinced of the sincerity of my own, I could be happy."

"Do you doubt mine?" said Alice, as her voice faltered.

"You best know if I have any reason to doubt it. I leave you now. Nay, do not weep; whatever fortune assails us, I will be true and constant to you. I am not yet so irretrievably ruined. I will instantly ascertain if Macintosh has availed himself of his power; and if I find we are still secure there, we will make preparations for a residence on the Continent; and perhaps Alice, when, from cir-

misfortunes, we are enabled to be more temperate. I may yet gain your esteem, and win my mind of the terrible doubt which almost crushes it.'

He kissed her neck or wrist, and, passing his hand round her waist, looked with intense anxiety in her face, then suddenly exclaiming, 'It cannot be—such beauty must be pure and virtuous'—he broke from her, and hurried away to his snicket.

In this short scene Alice knew more than any one of her husband's love than she had ever been before. True, he had been unmerciful in his kindness, but latterly he had become much estranged from her; his continual losses had forced him to lay down his temper, and he had retired to the solitude of his own chamber, fearing some sudden callulation. Then came the first spark of jealousy, and that annoyed him to be longer absent, lest he should give vent to the swelling, aching apprehension. Now he thought all he saw in Alice the proof of his enemies; in her society none could be desired but

comforted, and her accomplishments of mind and person were now to divest his thoughts of the gloom which had lately clouded them.

Bewildered by the great danger in which she stood, Alice remained motionless after her husband's departure: she felt how she had injured the man who in his poverty looked forward to her society as the only cheering prospect. She knew from the character of Macintosh, now too fully discovered, that when he should be foiled in all his endeavours, when Mopus should face him, and force him either to reimburse the victims he had gulled, or, driven to extremities, have recourse to that too plainly hinted at in his letter, he with his mean and unmanly spite would pull ruin upon all, and on her especially, as the cause of his exposure.

It was now no time for childish tears: she felt the approach of the storm, and resolved to call her greatest energies into action, and to string her nerves to meet the reproaches a jealous world would lavish upon her. At this time she had neither confidante nor

friend. Beauty, pre-eminent beauty, has seldom a friend. With men, that beauty merely tempts to selfish passion, without commanding esteem; with women, it leads to envy. Even religion Alice had outraged, and dared not look to it for comfort.

A few short days and the veil would be torn aside, and no one would be near to assist her; her mother was far away, all the associates of her childhood she had rather repulsed than courted, since her fortune had placed her in so splendid a position; and, with the exception of Sir Dionysius Mopus, not one soul remained of her early friends. Even in her mother she dared not confide; for she knew that she would spurn and disown the child who had so dishonoured her name. At length she determined on addressing the worthy Baronet, which she did in the following words:—

“ The child you once cherished, she whom you often have held on your knee, and to whom you have so frequently promised your protection, now claims your friendship: she implores you,

by the remembrance of the many kindnesses you have bestowed upon her, by the frequent expressions of regard you have lavished upon her, to come to her with all speed. It is no trifling matter which prompts this letter: your own welfare is in some degree concerned. But the man who could sacrifice his time to rescue a thief from the gallows needs not any personal motive to spur him to the assistance of one he always esteemed and cherished.

“ ALICE MASTERMAN.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“ What is it, Mary, that Frenchman’s saying to Miss Harriet ?” said Marling.

“ *Parole d’honneur,*” replied Mary.

“ Then I’m bless’d if he aint a going to cheat her.”

“ There now, he’s saying, ‘ *Foi d’honnête homme.*’ ”

“ Then he’s done it,” said Marling. “ I have been a deal about this world, Mary ; I’ve run my bowsprit end into every port in Europe, but I never saw, in all my born days, such a set of cheats. They are a nation of cheats : they cheat one another, and they cheat all the world besides. To hear them bluster you would think they could manage the univarsal

world, and the English navy into the bargain. When they speak of women, you would fancy the greasy-faced monkeys had only to look at them to overcome them ; and when they are made up for a Sunday's dance, every blessed barber in Paris is as conceited as the Admiral's peacock, when his tail's on end."

" Miss Harriet 's going to marry the Markis," said Mary. " She told me all about it ; and because I went to prayers every morning, she made a confidante of me ; oh, Mr. Marling, but I never do tell any one's secrets, yet I think that poor straight-haired Snimens will die outright, when he hears of this. Here's a letter come from him to-day ; poor, dear, little fellow, he gave me my new bonnet, and boots, and said how beautiful I looked on Sundays when I walked up in the gallery."

" If I catch him looking at your boots, or tying your bonnet, I'm bless'd if I don't roll him up like a shot, and stow him away in one of his own pockets ! We can't get married in this free country because we have not got our certificates—they call them papers

here—everything's called wrongly here: a horse is a shovel, and a cabbage is a shoe. My eye, what's in the wind now? the Admiral thinks he's got hold of the signal halyards, and is hoisting his own flag; he's pulled down eight bellropes within these last three days: I never knew a man who fought at Trafalgar so furious about nothing before."

"Marling, you skulking vagabond!" roared the Admiral, "why don't you come when I ring?"

"Please your honour, you ring so lustily that all the other bells begin to wag, and we can't tell which it is that makes most noise."

"Tell my daughter, Caroline, I want her."

"Ay, ay, your honour."

"Now, girl," said the Admiral, as Caroline entered the room, "sit down here by my bedside, and let me hear all about this marriage between you and Mr. Macintosh. I know right well that I am fitting foreign; I am brought up now in my last anchorage, and out of this bed I shall never stir an inch. There, don't be pumping out your heart, and

swamping your eyes; die we all must; sooner or later we must all go, and it's childish to blubber about that which we cannot avoid. I should like to see you and your sister provided with companions before I'm launched. And although I hate a Frenchman, yet I would not interfere with your sister, who, between the two humbugs, seems to have made choice of the gayest. For you, my child, I am particularly anxious; you have always been a kind, obedient girl; you have borne with all the follies of an old sailor. It's very wrong to have favourites either in ships or families, but a straightforward gallant seaman, and a kind affectionate daughter, always win over an observant commander, or an old father. This Macintosh is a man who has not been to sleep all his life on his mother's lap, or been fed with the white meat of a fowl; he has been everywhere, and he seems to have travelled about with a telescope lashed to both eyes, for nothing has escaped his vigilance. Now as to his money; Cary, my child, has he ever spoken about that; for rely upon

one thing—if the mess is badly supplied, there's sure to be a row with the caterer. When young people get in love, they swear they can live on that which would not feed a couple of sparrows, and long before they have been married a month, they find out that food is just as requisite for the hull, as rigging is for the masts."

"He thinks, my dear father, with the money he has got, and the certainty of making a great deal by mine, that we can live very comfortably."

"Comfortably!" said the Admiral, "why, my dear, without his assistance you can do that. What with your own fortune, and with that I shall leave you, comforts you could never want; I thought he might have spoken of something beyond comforts. What is he worth?"

"He has never mentioned any sum, but from the manner he lives, from his establishment altogether, his numerous hospitalities,—for he talks always of dinners he is obliged to give at the Rocher de Cancal,—his box at the

opera, his carriage and his riding-horses, he must be at a great expense, and I should *think*—”

“ Pooh, pooh, my child ; I begin to think you are not in love, for when a girl *thinks*, she becomes reasonable ; and when she has the use of her reason she cannot be in love. What will he *settle*? that’s the question, Cary. What will he settle?”

“ Why he seems rather averse to settlements, as it forces the parties to live on a reduced income, whereas if the money was laid out to better interest—”

“ Oh, I see—I understand—I must bring him to book myself. When do you expect him?”

“ He promised to be here at five o’clock.”

“ Then mind you mention to him that you have asked the Admiral to part company, and I’ll soon see if he is stout enough to convoy you through life.”

Lovers come to the minute, or a quarter of an hour before it, and so did Macintosh. On entering the room, the expression of his

fine countenance beamed with delight. Caroline imagined this the effect of joy at her presence, but it arose from his conviction that he had entrapped another victim, and that her money would be forthcoming on demand.

“ Well, my love,” said Macintosh, as his bright eye looked brighter, “ how are you, and how is your father ? I have good news for him, with which, however, I will not now importune you. I look forward with anxiety to your decision, as to the day when I am to become the happiest man in the universe. Have you spoken to your father ?”

“ I have ; he made no objection whatever, but, with his accustomed kindness, wished me a long life of happiness. I think if I tell him you are here, he would see you.”

“ Not yet, my love ; why, I am scarcely in your presence before you would banish me !”

“ You do me a great wrong there,” said the coy maiden, as she blushed ; “ but my father expressed a wish to see you, when you came. He is now awake ; and with an invalid we must seize the moment most in accordance

with his feelings. Come, you will not be long, I know ; I shall impatiently await your return. Walk in ; he expects you."

" Bring yourself to an anchor alongside of the bed, Macintosh," said the veteran, " for I have got something to say which may occupy us perhaps a couple of minutes—perhaps a couple of hours. My daughter has told me of the honour you propose doing me, by cutting out my favourite. She's a nice girl—a good girl—and if I did not think that I should die before you get married, I should be more coy about giving my consent. But I want a steady officer to take care of the fleet. My son—ah ! I have never forgotten or forgiven his desertion, and perhaps that *R* is marked against his name."

" Pray, sir," interrupted Macintosh, " do not worry yourself about what is passed and gone ; they say a man of sense never looks back, always forward ; the retrospect to the best is scarcely satisfactory, and to the wicked it is a gloomy scene of disquietude and uneasiness."

“ Hollo !” ejaculated the Admiral, “ have you taken out a licence to preach ? let’s have none of that parson’s provisions here.”

“ I thought,” said Macintosh, “ that reflections such as I made might lead you to think more of worldly business, for however ill we may be, none of us can go from this scene quite and properly prepared.”

“ What ! have you killed me already ?” said the Admiral, rather testily. “ Have you sewed me up in my hammock, clapped the shot to my heels, and stretched me out as stiff and as straight as a Patagonian carrot on a grating ? I’m worth a dozen dead men yet. No, Mr. Macintosh, I am not one of those gentlemen who, on finding himself obliged to pay Death’s income tax, wishes to cheat the collector. My business now, however, is, as you say, worldly, so let us begin like men : you have proposed, I believe, to marry Caroline.”

“ I have, Admiral, and if the devotedness of my future life can——”

“ Avast heaving there, shipmate ; never mind the long yarn we all spin before we are

spliced; I talked the same nonsense before I sailed in company with my wife. Before we had been a year together, we had shewn symptoms of being occasionally on different tacks, until at last we got on so badly together, for she would make sail when I wanted to heave to, she would moor when I wanted to lie at single anchor, that when she topped her boom and got under weigh without me, I felt as light as a cork ; and although it may not be exactly clerical to say it, yet I vow my greatest fear of dropping down Gravesend Reach is, that I might find her at anchor there, ready to take me in tow again. I dare say you will do the best you can to keep a quiet house and home, and that's as much as any man can say. The swearing to love her 'for ever' is a foolish sentence without a proper qualification ; and I should like very much to know, before I do get under weigh, the name of the man who first wrote out that ceremony."

" I will see," said Macintosh, rather willing to draw the Admiral from the subject, " if I

cannot, among some of my learned friends—people who have mines rich in olden lore—discover the framer of the ceremony."

" And make as good a return as your mine will, eh?—but to the point, for old men always ramble a little. You are to marry my daughter—that's agreed between both of you?"

" Yes, Admiral," said Macintosh ; " and I am now come to ask your consent."

" And that you shall have, provided *we* are agreed also. So you see I am all fair and above-board. You know that when a captain leaves the dockyard, he ought to see his ship properly equipped for the cruise she is to take ; that she always has stores enough for the trip ; and if she carries away a spar or two there may be others to replace them, so that she never floats like a dismasted hulk, rolling about at the tender mercy of the waves. Now let us see what we have got to start with."

Macintosh, whose mind had been straying away to distant speculations, became himself,

as the Admiral stopped, and he said, "Yes, certainly."

"Then do you speak first, and I will belay the yarn."

"Upon what subject?" said Macintosh.

"Zounds!" cried the Admiral, starting up and repeating the words "on what subject! why, on the subject of your means to purchase provisions. You are not like a purser, are you, who goes on shore for fresh beef, and is obliged to give a government bill for it?"

"I understand," said Macintosh; "my fortune, you mean."

"To be sure I do; come—start a-head, and save the tide; I shall be hard and fast aground now, before this is done, I see."

"You are aware, Admiral, that I have a large income from my mine, not to mention the many other lucrative speculations in which I am concerned. I mention this in order that you may see that, however much my income may be, the capital is mostly locked up; but the fortune of Miss Clincher will most mate-

rially add to our comforts, and make us as independent as any father could wish."

"This is a business," said the Admiral, "where the straighter we go a-head, the better we understand our course. What does your mine and all the other sources of your income make it amount to in hard cash?"

"That, of course, it is hard to say; the profits fluctuate."

"Well, as merchant ships count their longitude by handfuls of degrees at a time, cannot you say within a handful of thousands how much you have?"

"Certainly; sometimes four or five thousand a-year—sometimes less, and I have had more."

"Ah! I'm glad of it; that sounds well; then we will settle all Caroline's money and my money on herself, so that if you should be paid off by any misfortune, you can retire upon her half pay."

"That is a good proposition, against which I can have nothing to say; but it is miserable to see people starving upon three per cent., when,

without the slightest imaginable risk, they can get ten or twelve."

" I like always to have a friendly port under my lee; then if a gale comes and dismasts the ship, if she can get before the wind, the very squall which distressed her would always be her best friend to carry her into security. So we will settle all Cary's money, and mine, and perhaps you could screw up four or five thousand more, to make the roadstead snug in the old age of both of you."

" I will see what can be done, but I confess myself a little surprised at the arrangement. I have, in consequence of our former conversation, got some of my best friends to give up a few shares, which I counted upon your taking."

" If it's so good a thing, they will be delighted to have them back again," said the Admiral, " and therefore directly you can tell me what you can muster, we will arrange the settlements, and my consent shall be given, and you, I hope, made happy. You must excuse an old invalid—the gymnastics

are done, the boy's tops are laid by, the elephant has ceased his asthmatic breathings, and those infernal vendors of carrots and glasses are hoarse with bellowing—this is my best time to go to sleep. I've got used to the music lesson, for, after all, it is not so bad as holy-stoning in the morning."

Macintosh wished the Admiral in his heart a longer repose than the gallant officer required, and took his leave. The love-sick girl awaited him in the saloon, and her prudent sister left the lovers alone. It required no very quick perception to find an alteration in Macintosh. The gloomy look, the sullen manner, the cold salute, chilled even the warm beatings of fair Caroline's heart, and to her continued questions of the cause, she received only that common expression which means everything—"Nothing, my dear." He had been thwarted by the very man whom he always despised; the straightforward, honest, honourable sailor, was more than a match for the diplomatic, honey-tongued Macintosh, and the determined manner of the Admiral had left

no opening for those soft, silky insinuations which creep, in the garb of flattery, to the heart, and open the way for further deceit.

In vain Caroline tried to rally him ; he smiled as the worst enemy of man might smile, and an expression of malice seemed to pass across his face.

“ My father has said something to offend you,” said Caroline, in a soft voice.

“ Nay,” replied Macintosh ; “ not exactly ; he mixed the bitter with the honey, and whilst he consented to receive me as a son-in-law, he seemed to imply a distrust to me as a man.”

“ In what manner ?” asked Caroline, hurriedly.

“ On a point where lovers’ hopes are mostly wrecked—on the settlements.”

“ I want no settlements,” said the animated girl ; “ where I give my hand, I give my heart and my confidence—that which is mine shall be yours, and, if poverty assail us, then I should better prove my love by the readiness with which I should share in your misfortunes.

Do not let this annoy you. The money is my own, free from all control; and although I have every confidence in my father's discretion, I will not allow his care for me to cloud for one instant either your expectations or your affections."

A gleam of hope seemed to animate the face of the adventurer.

"But, after all," he said, "fathers do exercise great authority, even when the law releases the child from their control; and although, my dearest girl, your own good sense would perceive the immense advantage of our receiving ten per cent. for money instead of three, you will find it a hard task to remove from the Admiral's mind the impression he has received, as to great interest involving great risk."

"Is there no means by which this horrid money could be made available without my father's knowledge;—for instance, cannot I give it to you now, and thus avoid a settlement?"

"Such things," said Macintosh, speaking

slowly, as if almost weighing his words, “ have been done—a deed of gift has been executed, and oftentimes with the happiest effect. The money by this means is made secure. But I would not for the world that this were acted upon; the Admiral might consider it, as he would call it, ‘ laying an anchor out to windward of him,’ and you, my dearest girl, should be led and councilled by him, although it is evident he has not advanced with the rapid strides that the world has latterly made in knowledge.”.

“ Will you do me a favour?” said Caroline, as she fixed her fond eyes upon the handsome man beside her.

“ Whatever my own Caroline asks—what could I refuse?”

“ You promise to use no persuasions to turn me from my intentions.”

“ Your injunctions, dear girl, shall be obeyed, whatever they may be.”

“ Then have a deed of gift prepared for all—mind *all*—every farthing I possess, in your favour. The sooner this is executed the better;

we have few hours of pleasure in this world, and yours shall not be damped for so trifling an affair. Hark! I hear my father calling. Mind my desire; as yet," said she, smiling, "I am to be obeyed. The time will come when I shall endeavour to forestall even your wishes. Come early to-morrow—good-bye;—mind you get the deed prepared. Once more, good-bye."

"Dearest and fairest, good-bye; I will obey you, even against my own wishes."

"Caroline!" roared the Admiral.

"Again—again, good-bye."

He folded her in his arms, and kissed her tenderly, as he murmured, "My love—my only love."

"Caroline, I say!" cried the Admiral.

"I am here, father."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“ It is a tale I would rather not have heard,” said Sir Dionysius Mopus, as Mrs. Masterman paused, “ and I cannot advise you on it; on either side lies a precipice; you cannot silence the miserable adventurer without endangering the last penny of your husband, and yet you dare not set him at defiance. To confess your crime to your husband is to tempt a speedy termination of his affection. In my long life I never felt so strangely embarrassed; ’tis useless weeping, Alice—dreadful as your situation is, I would not deceive you by drawing a happier prospect of the future.”

“ You, surely, Sir Dionysius, will not for-

sake me; you will not see me thrown like a weed upon the waters—oh, for the love of Heaven, for the affection you once bore me, the friendship you have ever manifested, do not, do not forsake me in my affliction, and leave me to be an outcast in the cold, uncharitable world! Say what I had better do; and if it be to confess it to my husband at once, I will throw myself at his feet, and tell him all my perfidy."

"Sufficient for the day be the evil thereof. I see no reason to forestall the storm; when it comes you must bow to it, and perhaps be swept away in its fury. Three times, you say, have parts of your letters been sent to your husband; that he is become watchful, jealous, morose, violent, and distrustful: still he does not accuse you openly, or brand you with infamy."

"The letters already sent," interrupted Alice, "do not refer directly to my shame; they are words expressive of my love, but they do not bear the construction which would at once overwhelm me."

“Perhaps he may be satisfied and send no more; and yet I fear that when he finds all his schemes frustrated, and his villainy detected, he may be more vindictive.”

A servant entered with a letter for Mrs. Masterman; she trembled as she took it, and looking at Sir Dionysius, said, “It is from him!—what dare I do but read and answer it?”

“Alice,” it began, “I am ruined—irretrievably ruined, and through you—send me one hundred pounds by return of post, or I forward *the* letter to your husband. I *will* have a companion in my misfortune. Obey this, or live to fear the worst.”

“The infamous, cowardly scoundrel!” said the old man, rising with indignation; “the false, perjured, cold, calculating villain!”

“Take my jewels, good Sir Dionysius—take them quickly—raise the money—do not delay, for the post is early; it will give me one month’s existence without further fear of detection. Ah! I can understand from my own heart the sweetness the convicted criminal may feel from the blessing of one hour’s reprieve.”

“ Money,” said Sir Dionysius; “ if money could buy him to secrecy—if for a few hundreds I could secure the letters, and thus save you, Alice—poor as I am, and rendered poor by this heartless scoundrel who has lured my son’s avarice to my ruin—even to him would I give it to save you. Something may be done: here is the money which I had destined to a better purpose than catering to the extravagances of a swindler. Enclose it without saying a word. I will get a person of my acquaintance going to Paris to manage the affair delicately; it is the only gleam of hope which breaks through the darkness of the cloud above you.”

“ Is there the slightest ray?” said the half frantic woman as she clasped her hands together. “ Oh, that I could live to atone for my past life, by the determination of rendering every hour subservient to the wishes of my husband! But I feel that oppression which forebodes ill fortune. My neglect of the warning voice of my parent must now come back upon myself; still will I struggle to avoid the fated

time, for how can I abide the disdain of my husband—his just anger—his cold, his withering contempt?"

"I must leave you, my poor girl," said the Baronet, kindly; "I have your business to undertake, and I must not sleep over that. I have my own son to rescue from the jaws of this rapacious shark. I cannot tell how far I myself am compromised. Keep up your spirits, Alice; I dare not say you can hope for forgiveness from your injured husband, but I will hope and pray that this cloud may yet be dissipated, and a brighter day be in prospect for you. All that can be done shall be done. Learn, however, to reconcile yourself to that dreadful moment when the storm must burst upon you. Send for your mother, and have her near you."

"Oh, let me die rather than bring her grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. I could not—dare not, tell her—each word would hang upon my lips, and my guilty tongue refuse its office."

"Her presence may somewhat control

your husband's anger. I recommend you to have your mother near you—you shall not want a friend whilst I am alive."

"God bless you, my kind friend! Do not, I beseech you, forsake me because I have confessed my shame to you. I feared my own sex: had I confided in one above me, she would have shunned me; had I made a depository of my sin to one, either my equal or below me, each would have whispered it to my ruin. Men are more noble in mind, and I feel certain my secret is as safe with you as with myself."

"If I thought," said the Baronet, "for one moment that my tongue could betray you, I would cut it out."

For a minute or two, the Baronet held the cold trembling hands of Alice within his own; and as he admired her beautiful face, he could not help saying, "I cannot blame him for his former admiration. No man could look on that countenance and feel his heart secure."

"No, no!" interrupted Alice; "the fault, the shame, is mine, and mine only. I never

should have listened to the first word of levity, or suffered the first approach of familiarity. In this is all the danger."

" Poor child of sorrow, farewell ! at any rate for the moment all is safe, and we must trust to time and to prudence."

Scarcely had the Baronet left the house, when Masterman returned from the City. He found Alice in tears, as latterly he had always found her. All was now about to come to light : a letter received from Paris by another victim mentioned the failure of all Macintosh's schemes—the bursting of the bubble—the inevitable ruin of all engaged with him. Tenderly was Masterman still attached to his wife—even the poison of jealousy had failed to destroy his affection. There seemed an antidote in the beauty of Alice, and in the sweetness of her manner : no reproach ruffled her—no hasty word occasioned the bickerings so common in the marriage state. She remained mild, forgiving, and silent ; the tears, it is true, trickled down her pale cheeks, but no word of reproach, or no answer in wrath, ever passed her lips.

“It is worse and worse, my dear Alice,” said Masterman; “abroad everything is dark and lowering; here, in vain, I seek consolation. Your eyes are streaming with tears!”

“I will dry them instantly,” said the poor guilty one—“I will do all I can to console you. Shall I play, or sing to you?”

“No, no, Alice, my ears are sadly out of tune for harmony. I would talk of other things. This Macintosh is evidently a mere adventurer, and I am his dupe. I find I am by law likely to be involved in all his debts, and that we shall be nearly ruined. Do not reproach me.”

“Reproach *you*!” interrupted Alice—“never—never! It is alone my fault; all the reproach, and more. Your hatred—your curses, should be levelled at me!”

“Poor Alice!” said Masterman. “I see how you are afflicted by this news, and how difficult it will be for you to meet the necessary reduction we must make.”

“And do you know so little of Alice as to reproach her with such meanness? I would

follow your steps barefooted round the world ; there is not one menial office I would not do with rapture—there is no degradation I would not suffer, if you but forgave me all the wrong I have done you."

" Forgive you, Alice ! It is I who seek forgiveness of you. Nay, nay, dear girl, do not sob so bitterly ; you even unman me ! Come, come, dearest, this is childish ; we shall not be entirely ruined ; we shall still have enough to keep a snug roof above us, and we must make the interior warm by mutual love and affection."

Alice threw herself in his arms, and faintly articulated, " Oh, that I could die this instant ! "

It was long before she recovered from the swoon ; she awoke to her senses, finding herself on the sofa, and her husband bathing her temples. His eyes had not been dry, and his tender solicitude for her convinced the repentant Alice how much, how tenderly, he loved her. Had she not fainted she would have confessed all ; now she wanted the courage.

After some time, in which Masterman kindly

avoided all mention of Macintosh and his ruin, Alice again mooted the subject, by asking what new failure had been communicated to him.

“As yet it is but a rumour; but within a day or two, we shall know the worst. Some men, who are sufferers, have discovered that in former times Macintosh was of no repute; that great suspicions have attached to him. But you, who have known him all your life, surely you can throw some light upon his family and connexions?”

“Ask no more about him now, but endeavour to release yourself from him. My acquaintance with him has ruined us both; before long you will know more of him than you desire to know, and let me enjoy the few hours left of your society undefiled by that monster’s name.”

Masterman, who had calculated, as well as he was able, the full amount of his probable losses, became reconciled to that which he could not avert; and that evening was passed entirely in his wife’s company. Wrecked as her hopes were, still she endeavoured to appear in

spirits, and even, with her heart nearly bursting with apprehension, contrived to sing and to play. So well did she disguise her feelings—so kind was she in manner—so endearing in her expressions, that Masterman declared he did not regret the loss of his fortune, if every evening was to pass in such domestic felicity.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“At last, Mr. Macintosh, I have the pleasure of meeting you,” said young Mopus.

“I am delighted, my dear friend, to be thus fortunate. — The Devil himself,” murmured Macintosh to himself, “could not have been less welcome.”

“As I have much to say to you,” continued Mopus, “perhaps you will lend me one hour of your time. My apartments are near; do me the favour to walk up.”

“I really regret,” said Macintosh, “that, at this moment, every hour of my time is already disposed of. I must go this instant to the Admiral.”

“That visit will not be required of you, I

think ; and, perhaps, the parting might be painful to the poor girl, more especially as I should doubt your ever seeing her again."

There was a cool, satirical manner about Mopus, and it was evident that he had some meaning in his words which Macintosh did not exactly understand.

" But I have an appointment at the Admiral's at this hour ; afterwards I will be at your apartments."

" I have found you at last, and I do not intend to part with you in a hurry. This way, if you please—I take no refusals from friends who are so kind as to sacrifice their time to make the fortunes of others. This is the house —you have not far to ascend—the *entresol* is mine."

Macintosh finding it impossible to avoid the unwelcome invitation, followed, and on the door being opened by a man-servant, he remarked that the key was handed to Mopus, and that, at a sign being given, the servant passed outside, the door was locked, and the key placed in Mopus's pocket.

“What useless precaution is this?” said Macintosh.

“We must not be disturbed in moments so precious as these,” said Mopus. “Walk into that room, you will find everything arranged for our meeting.”

Mopus, although he was cautiously elegant in society, was a very different man when necessity demanded his attention. He had a highly cultivated mind, was chivalrously brave, and now felt bitterly the ruin in which he was himself involved, and which had led him to compromise his father, for he knew that that father would sacrifice every farthing to save his son from destruction.

Macintosh started as he entered the small *salon*. It had nothing remarkable in its furniture: the universal red-covered ottoman against a wall; the never-failing round marble clumsy table was in the centre, and a few chairs, built strong enough to last for years in common wear and tear, were in confusion. The chimney ornaments, so common in all lodgings in France, were not deficient; and the

large clock, the hand of which was on the stroke of two, ticked audibly. There was an escritoire placed between the two windows, which was open, and on it were heaps of letters all open; papers, with strings of figures, were visible, and all apparatus for writing in readiness. On the round marble table was a brace of pistols; some bullets, at the motion caused by the footsteps, rolled on the smooth surface, and a powder-flask stood erect in the centre. In one corner were two duelling swords—nasty, long, sharp-pointed, thirsty-looking, weapons; and opposite to them were some elastic-looking canes, neighbours to an immense horse-whip.

“ Make yourself at home, Mr. Macintosh,” said Mopus, as he locked the door. “ I think, before we begin to scrutinize those useful weapons, we will direct our attention to these papers.”

“ It would take a year,” said Macintosh, “ to peruse those documents, and really, my dear friend, you know that when a woman’s in the case——”

Here Mr. Macintosh exhibited a fine set of teeth, and smiled ineffably.

“We shall not trouble the women much. Now, sir, have the kindness to run your experienced eye over this long list of various sums paid by my friend, Mr. Masterman, for certain shares in the hole in the ground you have dignified as a mine; and have also the goodness to read this, which is written in your own handwriting, and which purports that if, before the expiration of a year, my friend wishes to part with his shares, you bind yourself to take them off his hands, returning the money.”

“Of course—of course,” said Macintosh, “giving me always a month’s notice. I do not walk about with twenty or thirty thousand pounds in my pocket; nor do I keep exactly that account at my bankers. But, my dear sir, if Mr. Masterman wishes to get rid of his shares, nothing in the world is so easy. I shall take them back with the greatest pleasure, and dispose of them at a handsome profit. I have received large sums latterly for shares, and

have disposed of all—nay, at this moment, I do not own one.”

“ Do you, Mr. Macintosh, believe me such an arrant fool as to be gulled even by your coolness. I am just returned from the mine; there are not ten men at work, and your own brother, who is said to manage the concern, pockets his fraudulent salary, whilst he laughs at the credulity of his victims, and the cunning and deceit of his brother. What security can you give me that you will refund the money?”

“ Any you may desire. Come, my good friend, you have been deceived. You have heard, I suppose, of my marriage with Miss Caroline Clincher: I intend to place all her money in the very speculation you call a bubble. I should not do this unless I saw a good prospect of a large return. Again, I have in Paris many shareholders, all of whom are desirous of giving more effect to my exertions, by contributing more money, and I intended this day to have written to Mr. Masterman for a further trifling advance of

some few thousands ; but as he wishes to be relieved of them, if you will have the kindness to give me a list of the numbers, and the amount, I shall be most happy to refund the money on this day week. If that suits your purpose, say so, and the matter is arranged."

" You very well maintain your character, Mr. Macintosh," said Mopus, coolly ; " but I am not to be so easily deceived. I know, from letters that I have received this day from Mr. Masterman, that no one will buy the shares, even for the weight of the paper ; and he is convinced, his wife is convinced, and I am convinced, that the ruin of all of us is alone attributable to you, and to the false description given of all your speculations, not one of which has answered. As to your marriage, that will never take place. I brought over a letter from Mrs. Masterman—ah ! you turn pale—and in that quarter all your hopes are wrecked."

" I have ample means of revenge," said Macintosh coolly ; then, mustering up the little courage he ever possessed, he desired that the door might be unlocked, or that he should

force it open. "As long," he continued, "as I thought no insult intended, I disregarded the childish precaution; now it is no time to allow of such liberties."

"Are you not," said Mopus, "a base, ungrateful, and dishonest liar?"

"Sir, this language requires an explanation."

"Do you not know the value of the words? or have you forgotten them? or are you a coward, as well as a scoundrel? I have always heard the one is the consequence of the other; and yet highway robbers and murderers shew a disdain of danger."

"Sir, will you hear me explain?"

"Can any explanation be due from you, after what I have just uttered? But words, I see, are useless. I will try the effects of this horsewhip. Now, sir," said Mopus, as he seized him by the collar, "I will be revenged for the injury you have done me and my friends. There, sir, there—there!" he continued, as he inflicted a terrible punishment, and, swinging the unresisting vagabond round and round, he chastised him until he was

almost unable to move. He spat upon him, kicked him, reviled him, abused, insulted, and smote him.

“ This,” continued Mopus, “ is but a bad recompence for all I have lost, and all the misery I shall bring upon my parents; your life alone can atone for that. Now, sir, place yourself upon your guard; there is your sword. I will not assault you until you are prepared. Stand upon your guard, I say, or by Him who made me, your life is not worth five minutes’ purchase!”

In vain Mopus attacked him by such words; he remained motionless on the floor, his face downwards, and Mopus, finding him resolved to maintain that defenceless position, resumed his endeavours by the cane, to make him sensible of his degradation. The coward groaned, and writhed in agony, but he never attempted to rise and face his enemy. Mopus having taken as much satisfaction from his victim’s bones as they would afford, unlocked the doors; and Macintosh, still crouching down, crawled upon his hands and feet, receiving the last

kick at the head of the staircase, which gave him a facility of descent to which he appeared somewhat accustomed.

Macintosh once in the street, walked with a rapid pace to the Admiral's. His punishment had been received upon the least vulnerable part, and he had so cautiously guarded his face, that it had not disfigured him. He stopped opposite a magazine of looking-glasses, and adjusted his dress, bowed rather familiarly to the Marquis de Pasdeterre, hastened to the Rue D'Anjou, was admitted, and shewn into the Admiral's bed-room.

The letter of Mrs. Masterman had been shewn to the Admiral; it unfolded all the villainy of the adventurer, and implored Caroline not to sacrifice her life to one whose only recommendation was his face.

On entering the apartment, Macintosh found the Admiral sitting in an arm-chair, and holding in his right hand his wooden leg, which he seemed to handle and to flourish under peculiar excitement.

“Good morning, Admiral,” said Macintosh, with his usual familiarity.

“ Good morning, sir,” said the Admiral.

“ I am glad to see you so far recovered as to be enabled to leave your bed.”

“ Indeed!” growled the Admiral; “ to tell you the truth, I don’t believe you.”

“ Ah, you joke! the pain must have left you.”

“ Now, Mr. Macintosh, as I always shewed my colours through life, and never disguised my ship, even to deceive an enemy, I will not deceive you. You are a convicted scoundrel, a privateer—damme, a pirate. You are not worth the value of the rigging you stand in, and you come to me, and tell me of the freight you carry. Your mines, and your other sources of wealth, are as imaginary as the pavement of El Dorado; and, old as I am, if you don’t weigh your anchors, and get out of my harbour, I will convince you that I have still strength enough left to take a little revenge.”

“ This very unexpected insult, I must say, I was little prepared to receive from a gentleman and an officer. Men in your profession

seldom act unjustly, and the *audi alteram partem*—”

“ Avast there,” interrupted the Admiral, colouring up; “ there you go again, disguising your sentiments under some foreign jargon. How do I know what abuse that may be? What’s the meaning of that ‘ haudeye,’ and your ‘ alter them?’ Speak English; I have accused you of being a privateer; let me hear your defence in plain English.”

“ What I said you have nearly translated. You have accused me; be just enough to hear my defence, which nothing but the love I bear your daughter could for one moment lead me to make. Your defenceless state is a security against any attack.”

“ Heave and paul with that; if I come in an enemy’s roadstead, I come prepared for action; and if one of my masts be shot away, I’ve got another to carry sail upon. Go on with your palaver, as the Spaniards say; and when I haul down the flag of truce, you may look out for a broadside the minute afterwards.”

“ You accuse me of being a privateer.”

“ A low, sneaking craft,” interrupted the Admiral, his face colouring, and his wooden leg being clutched more firmly.

“ Will you give me your authority?”

“ To be sure; no one publishes a declaration of war without gazetting the fact. A letter my daughter has received from Mrs. Masterman warns her of your villainy, and details the ruin you have brought upon them; charges you with being a mere adventurer without a penny, now seeking to enrich yourself at my daughter’s expense—a man in whom no one can repose any confidence. There, damme, there are the charges.”

“ What will satisfy you that they are false?”

“ The proofs that you are what you say you are. Where is your four or five thousand a year? where is all the money you have received from Masterman? and where, (and here a flood of tears broke from the Admiral’s eyes,) where are the dollars I have heard my son embarked?”

“ Allow me to participate in your grief for

the loss of that heroic youth," said Macintosh, as he felt for his pocket-handkerchief, at the same time wincing with pain, as he moved his arms. "I cannot, whilst I see you thus agitated, think of my own wrongs; a parent's grief demands respect. I will call again, and clear up all suspicion. You shall yourself be the judge of the purity of my intentions, and the honour of my character."

As he passed through the *salon*, he saw the figure of Caroline hastily retreating; she had, no doubt, overheard the conversation, and had escaped. In vain he called her; in vain he said he had prepared the document which she had requested him to get ready. Caroline had promised her father not to speak to him until his interview was concluded.

The Admiral recovered himself after a few minutes, and was mortified beyond description in finding the adventurer gone.

On gaining the *porte cochere*, Macintosh met the straight-haired accomplice of former guilt, now disguised as a clergyman; he did not suspect him of having betrayed him.

“ How fares it with you and Harriet?” he inquired.

“ Things wore a mild and pleasing aspect, until that French adventurer, the Marquis de Pasdeterre, made good his footing. The greatest saint on earth cannot resist a coronet. They talk loudly against worldly pride, and the sin of crouching to Mammon, but I would wager a coronet and a carriage, with a box at the Italian opera, against all the virtue in the world.”

“ Your own case to a tittle! Have you been there to day?”

“ I was there to breakfast; Mopus came in, gave a letter, and after a short time the sisters whispered, and my love asked me to call again later. There was something in the wind, as we used to say in former times; a great deal of whimpering, and such like effervescence of female grief. The fact is, there is a screw loose.”

“ And Harriet?” asked Macintosh.

“ Looked amazed, and with the usual upturned eyes, said, ‘ how shocking!’ But I shall try once more.”

“ Try and involve her past recovery ; elope with her. Girls of her description are weak. They believe themselves under the special protection of Providence, and trust the more in men. I *must* marry Caroline, and in so doing, you, my old companion, are safe ; nor shall you want money.”

“ Pray don’t promise that, or I shall have as much belief in your sincerity as those victims have now who are ruined. Ha! ha! my worthy friend, your face and your tongue are a flourishing fortune. How well you have managed the concern. The money, I presume, is all safe, and you will let them sell the mine to any fool greater than themselves.”

“ We will talk of that another time ; you do not want to buy any shares, do you ?”

The long and grave face relaxed into a smile, and they parted.

On arrival at his own lodgings, which were splendidly furnished, Macintosh began to put his house in order, by examining his accounts. The smart of the cane reminded him every now and then of the chastisement he had re-

ceived, and revenge, that busy devil of a wicked mind, claimed retribution.

The first thing which met his eye was a letter directed to him in Mrs. Masterman's handwriting. Enclosed was one hundred pounds, but not a word. Carefully he locked up the envelope, and looking at the money, he exclaimed with exultation—

“ She is at last alarmed. Now is she firm in my clutches; now my revenge shall be gratified. She has worked my ruin with Caroline, and in doing so has completed her own. I only desire one thing more to complete my revenge, and that is, to witness it. And yet, had she been true to her promise, and been kind to me, I would have saved her husband, and kept her in affluence. Lie there,” he murmured to himself, “ within the closest precincts of this *escritoire*, until a fitter period, not far remote. And now, if possible, to see how much I have involved the poor, weak, credulous husband—the fond admirer of the beautiful Alice Rivers.”

CHAPTER XL.

“Marling, come here,” roared the Admiral. The old sailor smoothed down his hair, and stood before him.

“Ever since you got married, you have grown as stupid as an owl, you sit as inanimate as a half-frozen monkey. I’ll disrate you—I’ll make a waister of you, if you do not obey my orders. Now mind, if ever I see that smooth-tongued, soapy-faced vagabond, that Macintosh, here again; if ever you let him put his foot on my quarter-deck, or get an entrance into my cabin, I’ll save you the trouble of piping to dinner in my ship, or of getting your grog in the steward’s room.”

"I begs your pardon, Admiral," said the faithful old fellow, "but I have got a queer kind of all-overnish ever since I spliced; and if so be that it can be drawn, or cut, I am blessed if ever I'll wed the ends together again. I never did like that half-and-half mixture; rum's always the better neat; and when a man belongs to himself, he has no one else to blame but himself."

"Ah, you fool! you must have seen the signal of distress often flying from my mast-heads, and what do you do, but run stern on to the same rocks, and get wrecked yourself! Well, there you are, and there you must be, until death shivers every timber on board of you, and you are stranded and bilged and broken up. Advice is very cheap, Marling, and I'll give you some of that. Do you wear the pendant! Do you understand me? There is only one captain to each ship, and mind you don't allow your wife to top the officer over you; there must be punishment on board of every ship, and if it's necessary to use the cat, don't mind disturbing me."

“ Thank you, very kindly, sir ; but what will young missuses say ? ”

“ Never you mind them. Now, Marling, you have been with me for the last five-and-twenty years, and I have as much confidence in you as a purser ought to have in his steward. I don’t like the cruisings of that French privateer—what do you think of him ? ”

“ He has been, your honour, signalizing with my wife, and I’d rather he’d make a start on the other tack ; that’s what it is that has overset me altogether.”

“ Jealous, Marling, eh—jealous ? ”

“ Why, your honour, one cannot be well jealous of such a hairy baboon ; but he calls her Madam, and brings her now and then a bucky.”

“ A bucky ! —what the devil’s that ? Is it an animal with horns ? ”

“ No, your honour ; it’s a bundle of flowers, in a large sheet of paper.”

“ Oh, curse the lingo ! I hate it. I hate the men, I hate the country, and I hate their

cooks, who disguise old shoes and young cats, and call them *vol au vents* and *salmis*; there's nothing honest about them—nothing straightforward; and if ever I could get back to Hamoaze Lodge, and see the glorious red ensign which waved from the peak of my frigate when I walked off with the Frenchman as a prize of twice my size, I would bless the happy moment, and never trust my old shattered hull amongst such a set of privateering scoundrels. They talk—damme, how they do talk! one would think they were going to set fire to the world, and dance round the ruin; and then, after having frothed and foamed, they subside into a stagnant calm, and become the ridicule of Europe. Go and tell my daughter Harriet to come to me."

Marling went out, and in a short time returned, with a face expressive of surprise.

"I can't find her, your honour."

"Nonsense, Marling, you are getting so stupid, that you will shortly be unable to find your own feet. Go, tell your wife to seek for her in her own room; I suppose she is

scribbling some cursed love-letters to that straight-haired parson, whom I never very much admired, or writing to the French Esau for some tickets to see sights."

"Yes, your honour," said Marling.

He went out, and presently came back, pale with alarm.

"I can't find my wife either, your honour."

The Admiral burst into a fit of unusual merriment.

"I dare say," cried he, "you would be very glad if she had cut and run, and left you to ride out life in the roadstead of existence at single anchor; you would work much better in single harness, as the coachmen say. Go and inquire what's in the wind, and don't stand there biting your fingers."

Marling soon made out, from the porter—those universal Cerberuses, who see everything, and know everything in the house—that "*Madame sa femme*" had gone out with Mademoiselle; that he supposed Monsieur Marling was aware they had gone to the dress-maker's, for that *Madame sa femme*

carried a large bundle, containing, as far as he could see, “*des robes*.”

“ You have not seen your hairy-faced countryman, Monsieur Pasdeterre, cruising about off the harbour’s mouth, have you?”

The porter, who spoke a little English, understood the question, and answered with—

“ Pardon, Monsieur de Marling, the Marquis was close by the big gate, and did offer his *bras* to de Mademoiselle.”

“ Oh, that’s it, is it?” said Marling; “ then I’m blessed if I don’t think all the squadron understand each other’s signals.”

“ Well, Marling,” said the Admiral, on his return, “ what’s the news now?”

“ Miss Harriet, your honour, has gone to the dress-maker with my wife; a strange sail hove in sight outside of the harbour, and after lashing alongside of my young missus, all three steered away together.”

“ And does your wife often go out to take care of this convoy? Tell Miss Caroline to come here.”

Caroline was ignorant of the whole concern;

but supposed her sister might have gone to Victorine, as the Marquis de Pasdeterre had declared that no one could make a dress but this priestess of fashion, and that in all probability the Marquis might have walked with them to the Rue Richelieu."

"Come, girl, sit down; you must begin and wean your heart from that Macintosh."

"Oh, father, do you believe in these reports? I cannot—will not believe him to be the terrible character Alice has depicted him."

"Nor I either, if it had come only from a woman; for you women, when you are inclined to make mischief to suit your own conveniences, are not over-nice as to the means, and even Alice might look at a handsome man and like him. But there is no getting over Masterman's statement, although I intend to hear his defence, and not act unjustly either to him or to you."

"But, father, your words were harsh, and perhaps unmerited; he bore them all for his love of me, and I cannot unwind him so easily from my heart."

“ What! child, would you love a swindler?”

“ We have often read, my dear father, of those who have fixed their attachment upon the most unworthy objects, and who, when those they loved were branded with shame and infamy, accompanied them to distant climes, preferring exile with them to even affluence and honour at home.”

“ Those, my dear, were the rare instances of conjugal affection. Your mother never went to sea with me but once, and it was not sea-sickness which deterred her a second time. If you had married the scamp, then, indeed, some allowance might be made on the score of duty; but beware how you splice—not even a seaman’s knife can cut that adrift. But be plain, Caroline—do you love him?”

“ I have no hesitation in saying, that all I ever imagined as worthy of love seems to be centered in him.”

“ Shake off this unworthy, mean thief,” said the Admiral, “ and let a woman’s pride supplant an unworthy affection. If he were as we believed him, not for the world would I thwart your wishes; but my duty as a parent

is imperative, and I retract my consent until he clears his character from the foul blot which darkens it. So much for yourself. Remember, you have a duty to perform towards me, and also towards your sister. Pray, which may that pious lady prefer?—the clergyman or the Marquis? Your female saints are always a little worldly, and prefer having two strings to their bows.”

“ As far as I am entrusted with the secrets of Harriet’s heart——”

“ Avast there, my child; don’t give us a text, and preach about it ; cannot you answer the question?”

“ The clergyman, I think, has her love.”

“ And the Marquis her affections, I suppose.”

“ She certainly entertains a high opinion of the Marquis.”

“ Does she, by Jove! then let her know, if the last drop of bitterness an old admiral can taste is to be administered, she can overflow the bowl by marrying a Frenchman; that I feel would crown all my miseries, and push me into the grave, in which, as you know, I have already one leg.”

“ At any rate, father, my sister will never marry the Marquis without your consent.”

“ Then I may be easy, and die comfortably ; for when Death has come to the last attack, and when this poor old battered hulk is wrecked on the rocky shore of life — ay, I hope my last words may be my strongest dissent from any such unnatural alliance, from which children may rear their hands in war against their relatives, and be taught to despise the great nation for which their grandfather has fought. But I had forgotten, Caroline ; did Macintosh speak to you about the settlements ?”

“ He did, papa, and I told him I did not want any.”

“ Foolish girl ! do you not know that when a girl gives her heart, she can never trust her head ? He would have sacrificed you, as he has done Masterman ; his villany will be soon exposed, and you will learn prudence by experience. Don’t be in a hurry to marry ; those who enjoy real happiness in that state are very few ; a large proportion can hardly boast of moderate contentment, and the gener-

ality are supremely miserable. There's Marling, talking of cutting the splice; and Alice Rivers—poor, dear, beautiful, and accomplished Alice—writes as if she had sacrificed her contentment at the altar."

"My wife," your honour, said Marling, "has just returned without her convoy; she came into harbour in great confusion, and now she is pitching and rolling about like a dismasted craft, calling out—'Oh, my dear master, what will he say now?'"

"What will I say, Marling?" said the old Admiral, "how the devil do I know? Tell your wife—order your wife—darn it, sir! command your wife to come here—and see she does it, or you may get your stores aboard for some foreign port."

"Here she is, your honour," said Marling, as he came into the room, pulling in his wife, who was struggling to get released from his powerful grip—"here she is, your honour, and a precious hard tow I've had of it; she'd have cut the hawser if she had dared, and she's been slewing and yawning about, like a jollyboat with a long painter."

“Don’t stand lobstering there,” said the Admiral; “I don’t want any crying and blubbering here. What’s the matter? and where’s my daughter? Speak, woman.”

“I wish I could tell you, sir.”

“Why can’t you—eh?”

“She went in, your honour, to a dressmaker’s with the Marquis; and after I had waited in the antechamber for about an hour, one of the ladies asked me what I wanted. I answered, that I was in attendance on Miss Harriet. ‘Why,’ replied the lady, ‘she has been gone this hour; she went out by the other staircase.’”

Caroline at once comprehended what had happened, and burst into tears, whilst the Admiral, foaming with indignation, shook both his hands at Mrs. Marling, and exclaimed—

“You knew of this, ungrateful, treacherous devil! Find my daughter, or do not trust yourself within my reach, for I feel a heavy pressure on my heart, and a bitter curse upon my lips!”

CHAPTER XLI.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening ; Macintosh had twice made ineffectual attempts to see Caroline. After having dined at an obscure restaurant's, he retired to his apartment ; he had no servant ; all his secrets were in his own keeping ; no prying eyes scrutinized his mass of figures ; no inquisitive valet examined his letters. He had returned earlier than usual, and in one of his fits of abstraction had forgotten to warn the porter that he did not receive that evening.

It had been an unfortunate day. The chastisement so liberally bestowed by young Mopus had left terrible tell-tale marks of his disgrace. The Admiral had evidently been persuaded by

Alice of his duplicity, and had conquered his daughter's predilection for a speedy marriage; and, to crown all, he had been served with an action at law in the French courts, for having given a false account of the profits of the mine, and for having, under false pretensions, raised large sums of money. The cloud was about to burst; and even this accomplished swindler hardly knew in what manner he could evade its consequences. Knowing himself, he dared not trust another. His only friend, Snimens —whom he knew to be little better than himself—the expedient of at once making over all his money to him, occurred to Macintosh; but then he feared that his valued friend might appropriate the spoil to himself.

He sat musing and brooding over the prospect of the future, when his bell rang violently; he had no escape, as it was evident the porter had declared him at home; he therefore opened the door, and beheld the pale face of his methodistical friend.

“It’s all over,” he began. “It’s all over, and I may go across the water again. Harriet

has eloped with the Frenchman ; Mopus is in chase of the fugitives ; the Admiral has shied his wooden leg at his servant's wife ; and Caroline is in hysterics."

" Could I get to see her, do you think ?"

" Nothing more easy, for that Caliban of a boatswain's-mate is gone one way, his wife the other ; and the porter's daughter, accessible, you know, to a bribe, is summoned upstairs to attend to the door."

" Wait but a second ; and now, if you will assist me, I will make sure of my prize. Had you possessed but half the quickness of this Marquis de Pasdeterre, who is nothing more or less than a shopman at Delisle's, you would have done long ago what he has done to day. Half of the Admiral's property must go to Harriet. I begin to fear your hair has not been plastered down quite so regularly since your arrival, and that some of your frolics have been detailed by the Frenchman ; however, I may yet serve you, although I believe you first whispered in Alice Rivers's ear the story of the Vera Cruz beauty. If I had told your share

in that transaction, do you think the friar's cowl could have concealed your blush? Come, I must not stand talking here; carry that large cloak and that hat; we may want them. Now for a cut out which will startle even an English admiral. Let us get into a *fiacre*, and leave it near the house."

They soon were at the Rue D'Anjou, and Macintosh desired the coachman to wait.

"Now, my friend," he continued, "it is a 'bold stroke for a wife;' but it is not the wife, it is the money I want. Stay you on the landing-place; if I succeed in getting Caroline to the door, envelop her in this cloak, and place the hat on her head, then run to the *fiacre* and open the door. All the rest leave to me."

Macintosh touched the bell lightly, and the porter's daughter opened the door; admittance was refused, the cause assigned being that the Admiral was very ill, and the young ladies gone to bed.

"If that were the case, my little Venus, you would not be here. Look at this piece of gold. There, my dear child, take it, and remember

this—if you will open the outer gate when I come down, without my calling out *pour tirer le cordon*, you shall have another; and one more shall be added if you neither see nor hear anything that passes. Do you understand?"

"I understand, monsieur," replied the girl.

"Take no notice of any noise; be deaf and dumb, and blind to all but my coming. You are very pretty, Josephine; how beautiful you will look in a new bonnet and a silk robe! Go."

On noiseless footsteps Macintosh proceeded through the ante-chamber. The door of the *salon* was open, and he beheld Caroline seated at a table, her hand supporting her face, lost, as it were, in a melancholy reverie. She had loved him, and love is not suddenly quenched. The brilliant eyes of the adventurer were present to her imagination; she gave a deep sigh, and a tear trickled down her pale cheeks. That moment was seized by him, who knew human nature well, and had fathomed the recesses of the female heart.

“I come,” he said, as he threw himself at her feet, “to take a last farewell; nay, start not, although I have entered against your orders. I could outlive the cruel suspicions of your father, but your cold neglect I will never witness. Oh, my Caroline, are all my prospects to be thus blighted; are the words of disappointed gamblers to wreck my visions of happiness, and snatch you from my arms? What have I done to merit your displeasure? why are your doors shut against the man you have consented to marry? Speak, my angel; tell me why at this moment your eyes stream with tears, and why those deep-drawn sighs almost prevent your utterance. You cannot believe these foolish tales of fraud and villainy, conjured up by a jealous woman, who, having heard of my probable marriage with you, has taken this fearful step to keep me single.”

“It cannot be!” said Caroline, her eyes expressing the very hope which her words went to deny.

“The man,” continued Macintosh, “who

would betray a woman's confidence is unworthy of the name; but still there are times when he may be released from the obligation of secrecy, and such a time is the present."

Macintosh now felt secure of success; the woman who listens is lost. Caroline, although she had expressed some surprise at the intrusion, had already forgiven it by her remaining, and well Macintosh knew that by a torrent of words a mind willing to believe is easily deceived.

" You doubt me; you think that a heart apparently so pure and spotless as Alice Masterman's could never harbour so vile a thought. You judge from the honour, the virtue, the integrity of your own conduct; and one so pure and spotless as yourself cannot believe the existence of dishonour in another. This, however, is the truth; often has she declared that I never should marry any but her. You wave your hand in disbelief. Now, then, if I convince you—if I prove my assertion, will you forgive me the treachery of betraying her, and feel how omnipotent is your command

over me when I consent to this breach of trust, overcome by the intensity of my love, and the conviction of your affection?"

Caroline was silent, but her eyes were fixed upon Macintosh, with that absence of expression which proves how heart and soul may be engrossed by only one object.

"I ask you, my own dearest Caroline, will you look upon this proof, and at once confess how you have been deceived, and how I have been calumniated? Do you know this handwriting; look at the post-mark and the date; it is not three days old; the inclosure, you see, bears no date, and is written in the hurried hand of (if it were not vanity to say it) despairing love. Read this—' Since I am not destined to be your wife, let me implore you not to marry another; all, all I have in this world—heart, soul, wealth—are yours. Oh, give but this one promise, and you will render happy for ever your now wretched and miserable Alice.' "

This letter was the one sent on the morning of the fatal walk, and after the reception of

Macintosh's letter, in which he declared his inability to marry her he had seduced, and the envelope was the one which had contained the hundred pounds.

Many letters had Caroline received from Alice; the greatest proficient in forgery could never so accurately have copied her handwriting. The light of the lamp concealed the difference of the ink, and yet she could not believe her eyes; suddenly she seized the envelope, and examined the seal. Alice, in her nervous and frightened state, had not forgotten the caution which Sir Dyonisius had expressed, in desiring her not *to write a word*, but she sealed it with the first seal near her; it was a pencil, on the top of which was engraved, 'Zitto;' she turned to the letter she herself had received, and there was exactly the same seal, the impression clear, and the wax of that bright shining surface which a counterfeit never gives. She trembled as she verified her lover's assertions; she had wronged him in her heart; her father had been deceived, and he, the inspired one, now knelt by her side and kissed her hand.

“Oh,” she said, “I have been cruelly deceived by her whom I believed incapable of deceit. Forgive me for having harboured one thought against your honour, and my renewed love shall repay you for this generous kindness. My heart sadly rebuked me when the first suspicion was created, but now it leaps with unfeigned joy, and all I ever promised shall be now confirmed.”

Macintosh sprung from his kneeling posture, and imprinted warm kisses on her lips; he drew her close to his side, and looking fondly and intensely on her blushing countenance, gave a deep sigh, and murmured, as he pressed her lips to his—

“Now is all my anguish over; now do I feel that justice is done me, in your kind and generous love.” As he spoke, he drew her gently towards the door, and as with the familiarity which love concedes, he passed his hand round her waist, he whispered, “We must not be thwarted again; your father’s suspicions once excited, nothing will calm. Be mine, my Caroline; trust in the honour of

him who only blushes that he has been forced to betray another to vindicate himself, and all the adverse current which opposed our union will be passed."

"Oh, I cannot, dare not leave my poor father now," exclaimed Caroline; "he lies on his bed of sickness, and has just fallen into sleep from the strong opiates the doctor has given. His heart is nearly broken by my sister's conduct, for she has, I fear, eloped with a Frenchman; my father has an utter detestation of such alliances; and finding all his best hopes lost in his son, and his advice neglected by his daughter, he has sunk into a fearful state, from which I cannot rouse him. I cannot, will not, leave him now, and if you love me truly you will applaud my resolution."

"All sudden griefs pass as suddenly," said Macintosh. "To-morrow your father will argue thus—'What has happened cannot be remedied.' He has surmounted many difficulties in his time; he has faced many an adverse wind; this will pass as the others have passed, and he will soon recover the blow which you, in all

the innocence of affection, believe his ruin. Think, Caroline, somewhat of me. You know how long, how truly, how deeply I have loved you, and in your generous return of my affection you declared yourself unwilling to sign your name to any deed which appeared to doubt my honour."

"True," replied Caroline, "and am ready now to fulfil every engagement but the one which would force me to leave my sick, perhaps my dying parent. So much confidence do I still repose in you, that I suggest now the signing of that deed of gift, thus leaving myself penniless, and only dependant on your honour to marry me. But do not urge me to do that which my conscience warns me might aggravate my father's sufferings, and perhaps make me give the death-blow to his existence. No, no," she continued, as she pressed his hand, "return to your apartment, bring the deed here, and I will sign it."

"Fortunately the deed is here," said he. "It is a power of attorney to sell the stock, which I will invest in shares, or otherwise, as

best suits our prospects. Before you do this, name the day of your marriage; and to obviate any possibility of your losing the money by any unforeseen accident to me, here is a will, by which you will find I have left you every farthing I possess. Name the day, or I will not allow you to sign."

For some time Caroline was silent. Macintosh urged her the more to fix an early moment. In vain she opposed the obstacle of her father's dissent. Every word her lover uttered gradually overcame the natural reluctance of female delicacy; he became more and more urgent every moment, for he knew that Marling might return, or Mopus appear. At last he said—

"I see, my dearest girl, the reluctance in your mind to name the day. I will do it;—this day fortnight."

"A little longer—say a little longer," she timidly replied.

"I have said it, and since your modesty refuses to express an acquiescence, it shall be tacitly given by your signature."

Caroline took the pen, and with a trembling

hand signed the deed. The haste which her pretended lover exhibited, in his endeavour to dry the ink, and fold the document, would have been perceived by one less enamoured than Caroline. His eyes were no longer fixed on her, but on the paper she had just signed, and directly he had placed it in his pocket, he folded her in his arms, hastily reiterated his warm vows of love and fidelity, kissed her fondly, and made a hurried retreat.

He found his worthy coadjutor below, waiting with the useless cloak, who, seeing Macintosh alone, felt an inward satisfaction that his companion had failed.

“Quick,” said Macintosh, “let us leave this, and reach the coach.”

The door was opened, and, as Macintosh closed it behind him, he took his friend’s hand, and said,

“I breathe freely—I have no time to lose—I must leave Paris this instant. If you would serve me, go, late as it is, to Meurice’s Hotel, hire a carriage to go to Boulogne, and,

having so done—here is my passport, I keep that always ready signed and vizeed—take it to the Poste aux Chevaux, and order four horses. Make no inquiries now, my dear fellow, all is right, and this night I must leave Paris. You will find me at my apartments; but do not bring the carriage there; let it stand opposite the Hotel de Londres, in the Place Vendôme. Here is a billet of five hundred francs; and when you have done all that I have required, come and apprise me. I shall only take a very small quantity of luggage, which we can carry under our cloaks, as I shall return in a week."

Macintosh parted with his friend, and returned in the *fiacre* to his apartments. He leaped from the coach, and, mounting the staircase, entered his apartment, and, (as he thought,) closed the door after him, never remarking, in his hurry, that something had impeded his object. He found his lucifer-box, struck a light, and when the candle had brightened into a flame, he became aware of the presence of a stranger, who must have followed

him closely up-stairs, and entered the apartment at the same time as himself.

“To what am I indebted to the honour of this visit?” said Macintosh, in French.

“To a matter of some importance,” replied the stranger, “and to the elucidation of which we had better talk in our own language. Allow me to introduce myself as Marmaduke Madcap. But don’t you think, Mr. Macintosh, you had better draw a cork of Bordeaux—for I dined at a *café* to-day by myself—and let us talk over the affair.”

“I am excessively engaged at this moment, Mr. Madcap. I expect one or two gentlemen every instant, on most important business; and if you could make it convenient to breakfast with me to-morrow, at ten o’clock, perhaps we shall have more time, and be better disposed to enter on the subject. Perhaps, hearing of the happy success of my mine, you are anxious to take some shares?”

“The devil a share of anything do I want, but a certain thousand pounds I’m come to talk about.”

“A thousand pounds!” repeated Macintosh.

“A thousand pounds, good money, and well paid, when you’ve got it. That’s better worth talking about, be assured, than anything your friends can say to you this blessed night.”

It was impossible for Marmaduke to have opened his mission better: the grasping avariciousness of Macintosh made him overlook his present position; and, considering that half-an-hour was quite sufficient for him to arrange all he intended to take with him, he determined to humour his new acquaintance, and, if possible, “fool him to the top of his bent”—in other words, draw forth his thousand pounds.

“I have,” he began, “exactly one half-hour at your disposal; but you must promise me, that, at the expiration of that time, you will leave me until breakfast to-morrow. If then we cannot finish our discussion, we shall have time enough, after dinner, at the *Trois Frères*, where, I hope, you will accept of my invitation for six o’clock.”

Madcap looked at the clock, sipped slowly

the cool claret, leaving it to time to spread its perfumed richness on his palate, and finishing his glass, began,

“ It appears to me, Mr. Macintosh, that although we have not been personally acquainted before, yet that we know each other’s friends. You are acquainted with Trophonius Moggs, who one fine day got converted from a pauper with an ugly name into a man of fortune with a handsome one.”

“ I know him well,” said Macintosh, keeping his eagle eye fixed upon his companion, and never interrupting him, excepting to verify an assumption, or record a fact.

“ Many’s the time I dined with him at the *Trois Frères*, where, by the kindness of yourself, we’ll dine to-morrow. There’s capital wine there. The *Romané gelée* is admirable, by my faith it is. Moggs married a great beauty, I’m told—one Alice Rivers. Ah, you blush, you do; by my soul, now, I’d wager half of Tipperary against the contents of a French marquis’s pockets, that you know her. It’s beautiful to see a blush on a handsome

man. Egad, if a bottle or two of this would put such a colour on my brown cheeks, it is not to-night I'd stop drinking—that is to say, if any one else paid for the wine."

"Oh yes, I knew her before she was married," said Macintosh, with a smile.

"I'll be bound you did; they say she was a beauty."

"Yes, she was very beautiful."

"I'll be bound for it, and Masterman won the prize; but I'm mistaken if he was the object of her love, whatever he might be as to her choice. All pretty women ought to be rich; nature, like a generous companion, should never give niggardly, so draw that other cork; you see, I've ten minutes more, and I never was more pleased with society in my life. Ah! this bottle is fresh and cool."

"Pray, who do you think was the happy man who shared her love?" asked Macintosh.

"Who but yourself, Mr. Macintosh; I dare say you knew that without my telling you."

"Your time grows short," said Macintosh, who began to think he was not much nearer

the mark than at the opening of the first cork; "perhaps you will come to the subject of your visit."

"That's right good," replied Madcap; "isn't it precisely about you and Alice that I have come to speak?"

"But I don't see exactly how I am to get one thousand pounds out of that."

"Of course you don't, until you are shewn; but I'm a man of my word. It's exactly the half-hour; to-morrow I'll be here at ten, and we will finish the subject just as surely as this is the last glass in the bottle. Good night to you—I'll be punctual."

"I can give you five minutes more," said Macintosh.

"Not for the universal world!" replied Madcap; "if your friends were to see me here, it might mar all our plans. Sleep soundly; you'll be a richer man to-morrow by one thousand pounds, if you're the clever, discerning man I take you to be, and that without any risk, or the sacrifice of anything worth the keeping. Good night."

And he took his leave, and Macintosh began immediately to prepare for his departure.

When Madcap came out of the house, an officer, with his hat worn across, and dressed in a long coat, with white buttons, and with a sword by his side, asked him the way to the Place Vendôme. Madcap turned towards him, and thus offered his face for inspection, as the officer stood near a shop-window in which was a strong light.

Amongst the few articles destined by Macintosh to be removed to England, was the packet containing all Alice's fatal letters. He cast a hasty glance at one or two, and then carefully placing them at the bottom of his carpet-bag, he proceeded to complete his arrangements. At the expiration of the hour, Snimens entered his apartment.

“ All is ready,” he began, “ and here is your passport. How can I serve you further?”

“ To-morrow you will call here, and inform the porter of my sudden departure. You will

pay the rent in advance for one month. Give the key, and desire my apartments may be kept clean, and my property protected. Here's more money than you will require. In my absence find out this man—Marmaduke Madcap—and learn all concerning him. Call on Caroline: tell her, that, on my return, I found letters of great importance, which summoned me to London; but that she need not fear my absence on the evening previous to our marriage. You start!—I have done well this afternoon, and you shall share in my success. At present be content to allow yourself to remain in some ignorance. Come, take that small box, and place it under your cloak. I will write to you as occasion requires. Be my friend *now*, and, whatever I may have been, I will be faithful to you hereafter."

Macintosh locked his rooms, and, calling to the porter to *tirer le cordon*, he walked out, carrying with him the carpet-bag, concealed under his cloak. He started at a rapid rate, and soon gained the Place Vendôme. There was the carriage in readiness.

“*A cheval*,” said Macintosh;—“*route de Calais*. Drive fast, and you will not complain of your reward.” He opened the door, and threw in his carpet-bag; he shook his friend’s hand, who shut him up, and calling out, “*En route*,” the carriage started. Macintosh knew the road well, and was aware that the shortest way was by the Boulevards, through the Porte and Barrier of St. Denis; and he was somewhat astonished at finding the postillions turn from the Rue de la Paix into the Rue Neuve des Capucines, and, crossing the Boulevards, drive along the Rue Caumartin. Arranging himself for his long and tiresome journey, he thought it useless to admit the night air, to argue with a French postillion—these gentlemen being admitted by all who have had the misery of being driven by them, to be as obstinate as pigs. The carriage turned into the Rue St. Lazare, and Macintosh, having made himself comfortable, proceeded to fall asleep. His mind naturally reverted to the successful undertaking of the evening; his object was to sell the stock, and invest it in

foreign funds, and conceal the *coupons*: this was now easily to be accomplished. Then he ruminated on the strange visit of Madcap, and his allusion to Alice Rivers. There was, in all his remarks, a certain knowledge of a former intimacy, and as he turned the words into every meaning which could be inferred from them, suddenly the carriage stopped, and the door was opened.

“Have the kindness to alight,” said a gentleman in a cocked hat, and long coat with white buttons, and a sword by his side.

“Has any accident happened to the carriage already?” said Macintosh.

“None whatever,” replied the officer; “but you will much oblige me by stepping out.”

Macintosh, imagining that some search was ordered to be made at the barrier for some suspected person, immediately complied, and he was desired to walk into the courtyard before him. No sooner had he crossed the threshold, than he heard the heavy door bang, and was aware that he was in the presence of some soldiers. “This way, if you please,”

said the officer, leading through one or two other gates, all of which seemed to close heavily behind him, until he came into a courtyard, in the front of which stood a very respectable and apparently private hotel. His guide crossed the yard, not paying much attention to his companion, opened the door of the house, and mounted to the first floor. Here was a slight delay, and a brief exchange of words between the officer without and a man within. After a few minutes the door was opened, then a gate; bars were removed, and bolts pushed back. Macintosh was led into a room to the right, in which was a long table, and sitting at it an elderly man, apparently just disturbed from a sound sleep. The room was oppressively hot, from the heat of the stove. Macintosh looked somewhat astonished, but had not the remotest idea of his situation. The room was piled with papers to its ceiling in different parts, and the whole bore the semblance of some public office.

“ Your passport, sir,” said the officer who had conducted him. This was instantly given,

and handed to the man at the table, who lazily put on his spectacles and took a pinch of snuff, and, before deigning to look at it, entered into conversation with the officer concerning his wife.

“ May I beg your pardon,” said Macintosh, “ for requesting you to use some despatch. I am most anxious to reach Calais to-morrow, in time to save the packet.”

“ Is he mad?” said the man at the table.

“ No,” replied the other, “ only a little bewildered.”

“ Ah, that is enough. Give him in charge; we will see to it to-morrow. Follow that officer.”

And taking off his spectacles, he proceeded to place his feet upon a chair near the stove, and turning the shade of the lamp so as to hinder its light from falling on his eyes, he begged the officer to shut the door, and wished him good night.

“ What does all this mean?” said Macintosh to the officer, who now formally gave him over to the charge of a short, quick-eyed, intelligent-looking man.

“ *Bon soir, monsieur,*” replied the officer, and took his leave.

“ This is your room for to-night,” said the little man. “ I fear monsieur will not find it very comfortable, but we seldom have any prisoners made over to us after sunset. Your carpet-bag and other luggage will be brought up directly. Monsieur has twenty francs to pay for his horses.”

“ Have the kindness to tell me, sir,” said Macintosh, “ where I am, and why I am here?”

“ Monsieur’s assumed ignorance is amusing,” replied the man, with a smile. “ You are in the prison for debt, in the Rue de Clichy, and you are here, I am informed, in consequence of your endeavouring to leave Paris clandestinely. Having a lawsuit to a heavy amount pending, your creditors have taken this precaution to prevent your escape.”

“ At whose suit am I detained?”

“ I think I caught the name of Mopus; but you will be duly informed to-morrow. You will find water at the further end of the gal-

lery, and there is a beautiful garden in which you can walk. This place is not altogether devoid of comfort, if Monsieur has money. You can order whatever you like, but spirits; and mademoiselle *votre cousine* is permitted to visit you, between the hours of ten and four. *Bon soir, monsieur.*"

The room in which Macintosh now found himself was rather small for so great a man—it was about ten feet long, by eight broad—there was no article of furniture but a fragile bedstead and a tottering table. The man who brought the carpet-bag took down the twenty francs, being the price of the first post to St. Denis, and the carriage was ordered to be returned to Meurice's.

CHAPTER XLII.

When Mr. Snimens took leave of his friend, and the carriage drove off, he was somewhat astonished at seeing a man with a cocked hat clamber into the rumble. Having some slight suspicion that all was not right, he followed the carriage on foot, and, owing to the miserable pace at which the inhabitants of the grand nation travel, he had no particular trouble in keeping up to it. He saw his friend handed out, but the gate was closed before he could reach it. He waited for about half an hour; and when the carriage drove away he ascertained that his friend was incarcerated, and that strangers and visitors were only admitted at stated hours during daylight; he therefore

returned to his apartment, and very shortly forgot his friend and all his friend's miseries.

Macintosh now began to find himself entrapped. He had no friend outside who could manage his affairs for him, neither had he at command the large sum for which the company involved in the mining concern would undoubtedly sue him. But when he lay down on his bed, making his carpet-bag his pillow, he soothed his feelings in his determination of revenge. He resolved the very next morning to enclose some of the letters to Masterman, and, in his sleepless night, selected those best calculated to ensure his end.

At ten the next morning, Marmaduke was at Macintosh's apartment, and here he found the reverend gentleman, who had taken the liberty of a friend, ordered breakfast, and was prepared to do the honours.

“Our friend,” he said, as he introduced himself to Madcap, “is unavoidably detained elsewhere, and he has desired me to make you comfortable.”

“There will be no difficulty about that, I

flatter myself. It is only to lift a cork or two, and broach any subject in the whole universal range, from women to politics."

"Have you been long acquainted with our friend Macintosh?"

The question led to hundreds of others, and Marmaduke soon found out the great intimacy which existed, and the great poverty of the reverend gentleman.

"Just fill your glass," said Marmaduke; "and I'll give you a toast. 'To any kind friend who will put five hundred pounds in each of our pockets.'"

"Bravo!" said the clergyman, "bravo! I wish I could find him."

"May be he is not further off than the door," said Marmaduke; "and if you could get into the same boat with myself, I've an idea I could land you with that amount in your pocket, within a week of this day."

"Anything short of murder, abduction, or arson, I'm your man."

"Upon your oath, would you now, eh?"

"Upon my oath—if it would neither put me

in the guillotine, nor chain me to a plank of a galley!"

" You might do it now, boy, whilst your friend is ' unavoidably detained;'" and he pointed to the escritoire

" What, break open that!"

" Do you take me for a thief outright, that I'd do such a thing, or think of it either? I mean that in that piece of furniture there are some letters written by a young lady; they are of no consequence to any but herself. She is married, and wants to get them back; and if you put those letters into my hand, I'll put five hundred pounds into yours."

" It is a bargain," said the clergyman, getting up, for at that moment some one rang at the bell. It was the porter, with a note from Macintosh, begging his friend to come to him instantly.

On arrival at the Hotel d'Angleterre, as the facetious Frenchmen call the prison for debt, Macintosh exhibited all the signs of one who had passed a sleepless night, and who felt a stranger amongst four hundred and fifty men,

all “unavoidably detained” also. Macintosh took his friend’s hand, and pressed it with much warmth.

“It is no use my deceiving you, my friend,” he began. “You see me here, and here I must remain until you relieve me. I find I am detained for the amount of the damages at which my enemies have laid their action. In order to prevent my escape, they placed a serjeant-de-ville to watch me. My midnight attempt warranted him in seizing me, and detainers are lodged to the tune of ten thousand pounds.”

Mr. Snimens gave a whistle.

“Be not alarmed. I never was in a difficulty out of which I could not extricate myself. On this occasion, I require a friend’s assistance, and you are the only one at hand—and, indeed, the only one with whom I would trust myself. If the only woman you ever loved had worked your ruin, what would you do?”

“I would be fearfully revenged, although I preach the good for evil system.”

“And would you not assist your friend to work out this revenge?”

“Unquestionably—of what value is a friend, unless he can be used in time of need.”

“Will you leave Paris this day to serve me?”

“As I am a Christian, I will.”

“And you will do whatever I ask?”

“In prudence and reason, guarding myself whilst I forward your views.”

“Take these two packets, and deliver them yourself—this to the person to whom it is directed—that to Masterman.”

“You are not re-buying his shares of the mine, are you?”

“No—I am only returning him a part of his wife’s letters.”

A flush passed over the face of Snimens, which he soon mastered.

“You know, my dear Macintosh, that I am poor, and this journey will be expensive.”

“I am aware of that, and am prepared. Here is more than you will want, and on your return that shall be doubled.”

It was a bank-note for one thousand francs. Snimens looked at it with attention, and folded it with care; then, looking at his companion, said—

“If these letters are for the fair Alice, why not direct them to her?”

Macintosh trembled as his face assumed a diabolic expression, and, in a low deep intonation, he said—“Those letters are my revenge. If at this moment the ten thousand pounds for which I am incarcerated were placed in my hand, to destroy these letters, I would not take the offer. She—she, my friend, has ruined me—she has blighted all my hopes, she has deceived and betrayed me. I will return the obligation. Swear on your oath, by all your hopes above—that oath is unavailing—by all you fear in life, and by your apprehension of sudden death, swear to give those letters to Masterman—to place them in his hand.”

“If I am able.”

“*If!*” interrupted Macintosh—“what *if* can hinder it?”

“Ten thousand. I might be drowned, I might be robbed, I might fall sick.”

“I understand. A mental reservation worthy of your hood and cowl, and which saves your pious conscience. I agree to that.”

And so the two “friends” parted.

CHAPTER XLIII.

The distance of three hundred miles now separated two families in all the horrors of the most poignant distress. Alice lived in eternal fear and apprehension: the postman's knock, once her greatest delight, was now her greatest terror; each footstep disturbed her momentary repose; her pallid cheek, her quivering lip, her restless nights, her lost appetite, her constant tears and sudden flushings, alarmed Masterman. Medical guessers attributed all to her interesting situation, and ceased to wonder at her sufferings.

Masterman's heavy losses seemed trivial to the state of his wife's health. All his love, if ever it were shaken, had returned with re-

doubled affection, and some unexpected payments having lightened the load which threatened to overwhelm him, he had recovered as much elasticity of mind as he ever possessed.

Alice's mother had been sent for; and here again was a source of alarm. Neither did the society of her sister much cheer her. She had contracted that gloominess of mind which ever attends the fanatic; every hour of her conversation was burthened with exhortations of necessary preparations for another world, and the necessity of being weaned from this. One settled gloom pervaded the place of her presence; she was a dark pall spread over the heart of enjoyment—a heavy lid over the eye of pleasure.

Returning to the Clinchers in Paris,—the remembrance of his son's desertion from his profession, and his miserable death, the elopement of his younger daughter with one of the nation he most detested, and the love of the other for a detected swindler, had so far worked upon the Admiral's mind, that a nervous irritation had overcome him—the most trifling

noise annoyed him—his health was gradually giving way, and his only friend appeared in the man he once held in the greatest contempt—young Mopus—who had shewn the excellency of his heart in his endeavour to alleviate the distress of mind in his father's old and valued friend; and although he could not altogether conquer the disposition to introduce French into every sentence, yet with the Admiral he endeavoured to control it.

It was evident the old Admiral was fast sinking. No tidings had reached him of his daughter, and two days had been lost in a vain and unprofitable search, during which time Caroline had not heard of her lover, for Mopus had never intruded his name, nor had he boasted of the flagellation he had inflicted, nor of the incarceration he had occasioned. But he had received the following note from Macintosh, who knew how to turn even disgrace and disadvantage to some account:—

“Sir,—I brand you as a worthless coward; you entered my room unperceived; you struck me when I was unprepared, and to avoid the

just resentment of one you have so injured, you have sworn falsely, and detained me in prison;—the day is not far distant when I will be amply revenged for your cowardly and unmanly assault.

“ F. MACINTOSH.”

This did not by any means discompose Mopus, who smiled as he read the production.

As Mopus left the Admiral’s room, he found Caroline awaiting an interview.

“ May I ask Mr. Mopus to grant me a few minutes’ conversation?” she began.

“ Whatever Miss Clincher asks, I shall decidedly grant. In what manner can I serve you?”

“ By answering without reserve my questions.”

“ I am ready to obey.”

“ I believe you know Mr. Macintosh.”

“ Intimately. This letter is a proof of my attachment to him—read it.”

Caroline read the above production, and blushed deeply.

“ May I ask where is he now?”

“ Certainly. He is in the prison for debt in the Rue Clichy, where I shall detain him until he disgorges the sums he has fraudulently acquired from Masterman, myself, and others.”

“ Surely, Mr. Mopus, you are deceived in him. He is not—cannot be—the man you suspect him.”

“ As easily can you detect his dishonesty as you can see the difference between an Englishman and a Congo negro. I have brought an action against him, and perhaps if you interest yourself enough in this vagabond to read the ‘Gazette des Tribunaux,’ you will remove any doubts on your mind. He has swindled every one, and would swindle you out of all your fortune, and laugh at you in your poverty, if you lent a willing ear to his falsehoods. But we are beginning to take the mask from his face, and I have left a considerable account of marks upon his skin. I do not think one month will obliterate them, and then I shall, in consequence of this letter, renew them.”

“ I fear my father is very ill,” said Caroline,

endeavouring to change the subject, even for one more painful.

“ It is useless to deny it,” said Mopus; “ one bright remembrance, however, cheers his last hours. Your obedience to his will, your acquiescence in his wishes: from him I learnt how nearly you were involved by this swindler; but your father is cheered by your assurance that you would not ally yourself to him, or sign any deed until his conduct was either proved to have been falsely accused, or justly suspected. See the inevitable ruin he has brought upon your friend Alice and on her husband! Let me, my dear Miss Clincher, as an old, and, I hope, a valued friend, implore you never to think again of this miserable vagabond: within a fortnight he will be marked and branded as a swindler. Give him up for ever—tear him from your heart, and let no remembrance of him nestle there.”

“ Good God! if your words are true, what a wretched pauper am I become!”

“ Pauper!” said Mopus; “ surely you cannot have entrusted your money to him?”

“ I will be candid: but I implore you to keep the secret from my father. I yesterday signed a power of attorney, making over all my fortune to him.”

“ Good-bye,” said Mopus, jumping up; “ I may yet be in time to save you! I will call again shortly.”

Mopus took but a very few minutes to reach the Rue Clichy. He mentioned to the superintendent the nature of the case, and the necessity of interference. This, however, the latter refused; but he ascertained that a gentleman had been there whose passport bore the name of Snimens. Mopus recollected the puritanical gentleman—returned to Caroline—discovered his address—and there learnt that he had just gone to take his place by the diligence.

It was now noon, and the diligence started at four, without the slightest delay. Mopus went to the *Palais de Justice*. He was introduced to the Procureur du Roi, and an officer was placed under his directions, to act as he thought best, but in no way to interfere with

Mr. Snimens, provided he gave up the document, which was to remain in the hands of the Procureur du Roi.

Snimens, being possessed of the valuable documents, resolved to turn them to the best advantage. He only knew the contents of one packet, Alice's letters—for which he could obtain five hundred pounds. The other was made up as a letter, and addressed to a miserable attorney in Furnival's Inn. Having taken his place, he returned to his house, and left word that he was to be found, if required, at Mr. Macintosh's apartments. Close to the door, he found Mr. Marmaduke Madcap, and they entered together.

“Our luck is on the rise!” said Snimens; “I have one hour I can devote to you. Tell me, in plain words, what security have I that you will pay me the five hundred pounds?”

“This check,” said Madcap. “Sure it is written as plain as ever a check was penned—just refresh your eyes by looking at it!”

“I never felt such a desire to be robbed in my life!—this ugly packet of letters makes

my pocket stick out. Don't you think you could contrive, whilst I am arranging my cravat, just to relieve me, without my knowing a word about it, of that large parcel?"

"No!—do you mean it? By Jupiter! I'll cut the skirt clean off, and leave you like a one-tailed bashaw, with more money in your pocket than ever bulged it out before! Now, as you are a clergyman, I call upon you to speak the truth!"

"Then you had better not call upon me by that title, for I'm no more a parson than you are. It suited my purpose to be mistaken for one; for all the young ladies like straight hair and sombre looks; and, to accommodate myself to the world's prejudices, I called myself a reverend, and did all I could to get the curl out of my locks."

"Sailing under the black flag denotes a pirate, and plundering a pirate is every way legal! But, before I proceed to rob you, let me understand one thing—have you *all* her letters?"

"I'll be frank with you," replied Snimens.

“ I cannot say if I have all, or only a part, but they are her letters, and to be given to her husband.”

“ Indeed, her husband shall never see them, I'll be bound ; and here again is another hitch in the cord—how do I know they are her letters ? I take a packet from you quietly with one hand, and with the other, without your feeling it, I put this check in your pocket. Suppose, when I come to examine it, I don't find one of the letters I'm hunting after—what a precious quantity of dirt I should eat, as the Persians say !”

“ There is reason in most things, and plenty in that ; and you need not be in such a violent hurry to make me carry this great weight. Many a time I've been robbed looking into a caricature-shop, and the thief has had time enough to look at the plunder before I missed it. This cravat of mine is very badly arranged, and I'll just put my coat in the other room whilst I set it to rights.”

Madcap took from the pocket the parcel directed to Masterman. It was sealed, and he

hesitated some time before he ventured to break it. At last, arguing with himself that he was justified, and that he would not read one word but the signature, he opened it. There were fourteen enclosures ; some had no signature, and the unwilling eye caught the warm termination ; others had only the initials A. R., and again, in a few was the name of Alice. He replaced them, and returned to the room.

“ There are fourteen,” he said, “ out of forty-two. I admit they are part of the letters I desire to possess. How are we to get the others ? ”

“ Surely,” said Snimens, “ you do not want to throw me over now you have robbed me ! ”

“ Look here, my friend, I never dealt dishonestly with any man, and I have robbed you for your own convenience and comfort. Here is my letter, and you shall judge for yourself —read this :—“ I understand there were forty-two letters in all ; you will at once perceive, that without we recover the whole, a part will be useless.”

“ It is a very neat business altogether ; and our only way to come at the rest is, by my remaining in Paris. By-the-bye, I remember he told me they were only a part of the letters ; and as you seem a straightforward honest man, about a good deed, which may make a beautiful girl happy, I’ll trust you with these, and look after the rest. I’ll go back to him before I start, and see how the wind sets.”

At this moment Mopus entered, and was recognised by Snimens, whilst Madcap cocked his hat on one side as a signal that he was not invited to dinner that day.

Mopus could not help smiling at his old friend and his signal. He was glad to find him, as he knew the honest-hearted Hibernian would assist him in any act of justice. He made no long preamble ; he mentioned the business he came upon, and the attendance of the officer below.

“ Rob me, my dear fellow,” said Snimens to Madcap, “ and our fortune will be made. There’s the letter in that pocket.”

“ I’ll take it,” said Madcap; “ and it’s lucky for you that I do, for otherwise I’d lay an information against you for endeavouring to defraud the post-office. I am to dine with you to-day, Mopus. The *Trois Frères*, I hope—that *Romané gelée* was delicious. Let me get out of the house with the property, and you know where to find me—in the old place, Rue Caumartin. They make me pay my rent in advance; so not being in debt, I remain with a good character.”

The officer allowed Marmaduke to pass, and Mopus afterwards dismissed him with a fee, saying he believed there would be no interference necessary; and Snimens, glad to escape any affair with the police, determined to return to Macintosh, and endeavour to obtain the other letters. Mopus resolved to return the deed to Caroline, at all risks, and after complimenting Snimens at his lucky escape, left him to pursue his own intentions, whilst he walked with a quick pace towards the Rue Caumartin.

CHAPTER XLIV.

“ What ! dare they seize my papers—my private letters—my common correspondence ? ” said Macintosh, when Snimens had detailed the event after his own fashion.

“ Dare ! ” repeated Snimens ; “ why is there anything the police *dare not*, in this country, where slavery is dressed up in a Liberty suit, and laughs at the victim it cajoles ? A French police officer is as absolute as the Emperor of Russia—they are the eyes of the state—and a very unhealthy state it must be to require such active observance. What now do you wish me to do ? I have taken my place for this evening—indeed, in

an hour from this time I ought to start; here is my receipt for my place."

"I will not be baulked, and yet I cannot stir. What has been done with the letter to Furnival's Inn?"

"It was taken from me, as I explained, and I was threatened with a prosecution for attempting to defraud the post-office—it is only one thousand francs penalty for each letter."

"You can now better serve me in Paris: will you call on this gentleman and tell him to come to me instantly?"

Macintosh accompanied Snimens below: they passed through a long gallery, in which, as it seemed, nearly all the prisoners were congregated—here was a miniature billiard-table, at which two men, without their coats, were playing; a dozen lookers-on stood idly commenting on the different strokes, and bets were made in sous, none having money enough to risk a franc. Near this invitation to ruin was a circular table, on which were nine pins—this had its votaries; whilst farther on was a

jeu de Tonneau, an innocent game, in which the urchins in the Champs Elysées mostly rejoice, and which brings considerable moneys into the pockets of the owners. Here and there two excited paupers played at back-gammon for their last sou; whilst in a corner, as snugly ensconced as the nature of the place admitted, were a couple of grey-headed chess-players—fortunate men—who, in the excitement of this interesting game, lost all their miseries in the prospect of a check.

In this long gallery were “all sorts and conditions of men:” broken-down butchers harmonized with musicians; whilst a stately personage, pointed out as a minister of the Protestant religion, walked arm-in-arm with a once rich banker, thus keeping up the appearance of an aristocracy, even where all were levelled.

“Plenty of amusement,” said Snimens, “in watching the people. I will pick you out every one of our countrymen. If they are not excited by gambling, they sit down like that gentleman, brooding over their misfor-

tunes. A Frenchman exclaims, *Fortune de la guerre!* and can set the nation to rights—‘to mend the world’s a vast design.’ I should have no disinclination to remain a prisoner, if merely to learn how to bear up against misfortunes.”

“ It ill suits my mind,” said Macintosh. “ Oh that my curses could crush that Mopus; and that my letters had wrought the ruin I anticipated! good bye. Send me this lawyer, and remember my words; all the chances and changes which can happen to me shall not stop my revenge. Come and see me to-morrow.”

“ Here,” said Snimens, “ is the remainder of your thousand francs.”

“ Have you turned honest?” said Macintosh, with a sneer. “ When we were at Vera Cruz, we were not so nice; but, as the sailors and the lawyers say, ‘ Shark never eats shark.’ Keep it—it may enable you to do yourself some service, and render you disposed to favour me. I can make your fortune in a minute.”

“ Can you, by Jupiter! then I wish you would.”

“Send me the lawyer, and to-morrow we will talk of this.”

Not long after this interview, arrived the lawyer. He was a man who particularly endeavoured to plead the causes of all desperate people: a regicide was sure of his counsel, and he would embrace a murderer on the scaffold, in order that his name might appear in the papers. But his great aim was to be the lawyer of the English; these people pay higher than Frenchmen. Law is a dear plaything in England, and a diminution in the price of the article abroad makes our countrymen very litigious. To fasten upon these, and thus acquire a celebrity, even by volunteering to do the work of some cases gratis, had brought this man into some unenviable notoriety. He was quick in his manner, had large bright eyes, and would have done better as an Old Bailey bully than an exhibitor in some of the small courts of the Palais de Justice. On hearing Macintosh’s case, which he apparently did with some attention, he instantly exclaimed—

“A common case, and easily overcome; the proof is difficult; and we can find people who could swear that the mine was *once* a profitable affair, and that want of money alone renders it unprofitable now.”

“But cannot I get out of this vile incarceration?”

“I will apply: a security for your appearance may be requisite, which, perhaps, your bankers would give. I shall enter an appearance to the action, and my name and respectability will do much to forward your cause. A little money, judiciously laid out, goes great lengths in a French Court of *Justice*. I see this action is brought by a Frenchman; that, I frankly tell you, is much against your success. We talk much of the equality of the law, but an Englishman labours under great disadvantages when he combats against a Frenchman. Like a diplomatic physician, you see, I make the worst of your cause, in order to ensure myself greater merit in my success. I will let you hear from me soon.”

Macintosh retired to his room, which al-

ready assumed a more cheerful aspect. He had bribed the jailor, and now his window overlooked the garden; here he could see his fellow-prisoners at their accustomed exercise. He looked for some time at many a heavy-hearted wretch, who was doomed to linger for five or six long years within the high walls that encircled him; then, turning away, he took from his portmanteau the letters of her who once so fondly, so fatally, loved him; he read them through; each line raised an emotion, almost forgotten by him, who now understood the value of the great bard's expression, "Sweet love to bitter hatred turn'd." Here was the heart of the beautiful Alice laid bare—here was all the unguarded confidence of a fond woman's love—here it was believed no eye would ever roam but his—and leaving nature free to riot in the expressions of affection, the unguarded Alice had poured out all her soul, the unblushing paper retaining its innocence; and though the cheek tingled, and the hand trembled, yet she could not record the blush, or portray the bright twinkling of the moist eye.

For more than an hour did Macintosh sit reading and re-reading these letters; his heart still beating with a sensation of thrilling excitement, until the evening began to close in, and the words grew fainter and fainter to his sight. Even in his prison Alice had lightened the heavy hours, and once more drawn the man from himself, and duped the cheat; but he was a prisoner, and she was the cause; revenge was still his only consolation, and in the determination of his vengeance he slept.

Mopus, when possessed of the power of attorney, at once returned to Caroline; she received him kindly and gratefully.

“Let not a vestige of this remain,” he said. “*I* may be compromised, as well as yourself, by its existence; throw it in the fire.”

Caroline, before she did this, ascertained that the letter contained the deed; and she told Mopus that there was a long letter inclosed.

“I will not look at it,” he replied; “but you are justified in so doing. I will wager my life that the letter will convince you how

false and how treacherous is that man; read it."

With a trembling hand (for love, we are told, cannot be quenched in a moment, or the memory of the beloved be instantaneously eradicated from the heart) she held open the letter; her eyes filled with tears, her lips quivered, and over her pale face flew the live blush of shame and indignation. It was too true; the letter was an order to sell the stock; to invest it in foreign funds; to forward the *coupons*, under a false name, to Brussels, to which place he meditated a retreat; and a hint was given that some secrecy and much expedition were requisite.

She handed the letter to Mopus, who, having read it, tenderly compassionated her misfortunes, and alleviated her sufferings.

Caroline was now convinced of her lover's perfidy, and she shook the unworthy viper from her heart.

The old Admiral had now become alarmingly ill. The best medical adviser in Paris was by his bed-side, while in a corner of the

room, occasionally smoothing his own hair, stood Marling. The Admiral had fallen into a drowsiness from which no art could restore him. There was no indication of sudden death in the strong frame of the old sailor, but he did not seem to hear, nor did he answer any of the numerous questions which either affection or duty suggested.

Mopus now entered with Caroline, and was much overcome at seeing the great change which had occurred in so short a space of time. The room was as quiet as the grave to which the invalid was fast hastening. With noiseless step the affectionate child moved round the bed; nor did the presence of the doctor and Mopus deter her from falling on her knees, and, taking her father's hand in hers, she offered up her whispered prayers for his recovery. Seeing her thus engaged, the others quitted the room.

“Tell me,” said the Doctor to Marling, as he took a pinch of snuff and scratched his wig —“how long has the Admiral been in this state?”

“About an hour ago, your honour; all night he talked as wild as Backstay did in the screened berth of the ship, when he was mad; at one time he was fighting his old frigate; at another, telling his son to be true to his king and his captain; then he would out with an oath against all Frenchmen—that always eased his mind, and against all psalm-singing women. Suddenly he would become restless, and ask for his daughter—not that angel, but t’other one, who cut and run with that hairy-faced monkey; then, again, it would be—‘Over the starboard side, my lads! don’t throw a shot away—steady boys, steady; shave her stern, and I’ll give the carpenter’s crew some work to repair the frame;’ and then his face brightened up, his eye, although it looked like shiny paper, was all fire within, and as his voice grew weaker, it would be—‘Marling, get my cocked hat and sword, have the boatswain to pipe the side, and let us all look as if we had nothing to do and less to care about:’ after this, he would mutter something I could not hear, and sink quite exhausted.”

“ May I ask your opinion of his case ? ” said Mopus.

The doctor shook his head, rapped his box hard enough, as Marling remarked, to stave in a puncheon, and uttered quickly, “ Very bad, very bad—almost hopeless.”

“ I will write instantly to my father, and provide some retreat for the daughter.”

“ Cannot you find the sister who took this hasty and unfortunate step with that French adventurer ? ”

“ I wish *I* could,” said Marling, “ and I’m bless’d if I would not give that Crappo a spice of my mind—the infernal privateer, to come here under false colours, and cut out a friendly craft, and, after ransacking her hold, I dare say he’s left her without oar, mast, canvas, or rudder, to stem the current which will set in with the ebb tide of her misfortunes.”

The doctor, hearing Caroline speak, entered the room. She had raised the Admiral’s head, and his eyes were open ; he was looking at her, whilst his fingers convulsively pressed against her neck, for she had entwined his arm round

her, as she kissed his pale lips, and implored him to mention her sister's name with kindness and forgiveness ; then she would place her ear close to his mouth, to catch the sound the movement of his lips indicated.

“ No, no, dear father—not for me—not for me ; let me catch my sister's name : all grateful as I am for this remembrance of me in your blessing, ten thousand times more shall I estimate it, if I catch the heavenly sound of forgiveness for her who has disobeyed your will.”

She kept her ear close—her face lightened with joy, and muttering quickly, “ Bless you—bless you, father !” she sank by the side of the bed, and in the giddy dizziness which succeeded, saw not the fallen jaw which marked the death of her parent.

To the frequent entreaties of the doctor and Mopus that she would leave the house of mourning, Caroline steadfastly refused ; she begged she might be left alone with the dead, and in her assiduous discharge of the last duties to her parent, Mopus first became ac-

quainted with the virtue and affection of her mind.

After the funeral was over, she left Paris, with Marling and his wife, and was received with joy by Alice, who, having heard of her conduct, felt as if Heaven had sent her one friend, to whom she could turn in her distress, if the threatened cloud should overwhelm her.

CHAPTER XLV.

The day arrived for the trial of Macintosh, and, in spite of all his exertions to be liberated from his imprisonment, he had failed.

In vain his miserable advocate endeavoured to prove that the mine had once been lucrative; the former owner was called by the counsel for the plaintiffs, and the returns of this hole in the ground were produced—he made more by its sale than could be made by its possession. The whole transaction was laid bare; it was evident that, under false impressions, false documents, and false statements, the proprietors had been inveigled; the proofs of the money having been given and received for the shares was undenial; and the learned counsel, having laid great stress upon the necessity of shielding the innocent and unwary French-

men from the practised duplicity of English adventurers, the judges, without the slightest hesitation, condemned Macintosh to refund the money, to pay all expenses of the action, and to remain in St. Pelagie until these demands were satisfied, or until the ten years—the utmost limit of imprisonment for debt—had expired.

The grief and vexation of the scoundrel were evident. He yielded to necessity, was conducted in the first instance to the Rue Clichy, and in all the mortification of disappointment, and all the prospects of prolonged imprisonment, he requested to stop at one of the many post-offices, and with his own hand dropped into the box rather a weighty letter. He sighed as he did it; but the sigh was not one of love, but at the bitter regret that, whatever might occur, he should be for ever in ignorance of the results, or only get those accounts which are borne on the wind of scandal, and which accumulate with every breath, until they sink into insignificance.

From a French prison escapes are very rare;

and when Macintosh was removed to St. Pelagie, he at once made up his mind to what was inevitable.

Mopus, on the termination of this affair, returned to England. He had been most active in bringing this swindler to justice; he gave Marmaduke a handsome remuneration for his services; and Snimens, whose plausible looks always procured him some credit, got money from both sides, by assisting Macintosh in the prison, and Mopus out of it—a second Janus, he wore two faces, each admirably adapted to dupe those who employed him.

Marmaduke Madcap to this day walks about Paris: he is as careful as ever to dine at everyone's expense but his own, and is still known as the man who begins his conversation by informing his companion that he is engaged to dine to-day, but not to-morrow; he is employed by dinner-givers at the Rocher and the Trois Frères to order the dishes. Every rich Englishman who arrives, he panders to their pleasures and suggests their amusements; he still fastens to the duke, in preference to the marquis, and so down through every grade to

the tailor or the shoemaker. Thus he lives and thrives—tolerated by all, and esteemed by none—a stalking proof how difficult it is for idleness to be respectable.

The letters, which Sir Dionysius had received from Marmaduke, convinced him that he never could possess all the correspondence of the once infatuated, and now truly repentant Alice. On the death of the Admiral he hastened to London, and having heard from his son how nearly Caroline had fallen a sacrifice to the artful duplicity of Macintosh, he contemplated turning her to some advantage, in order to serve his former favourite. He was not of that unrelenting, unforgiving soul, who cannot pardon an erring sister, or who cannot believe in the sincerity of repentance. He had seen life in all its varied colours, and knew how often the young and the thoughtless, though good at heart, were led into evil; he was aware that the storm, if it burst at all, would not be long delayed, and he took his abode up in the vicinity of Alice's, his head suggesting several plans,—his heart dictating only those of kindness and benevolence.

“ Come, Caroline,” he said, as he released her hand, which he had held for several minutes, “ dry those tears; a good Christian bows with all reverence to the decree of Providence; in the common course of nature you must have anticipated this loss; it is natural that the old should die before the young; and however much you may regret your kind parent, still it better becomes you to bear up against the misfortune than to give way to useless and unavailing regrets. You have much to do; you have a duty as a sister towards a sister, and as a friend towards a friend. Forgive an old man’s way of endeavouring to do a good act, and excuse me if, in its execution, I touch upon some chords which vibrate near your heart. Do you know the handwriting of this Macintosh?”

A sudden blush coloured the cheek of Caroline, and she remained silent.

“ I feel the reproach, my poor child, but I have an object in view; and I repeat the question, resolved rather to bear your displeasure than forego an imperative duty.”

“ I know it too well,” replied Caroline.

“ You could not mistake it for another’s? Is that his?” continued the Baronet, as he drew from his pocket one of the letters which Marmaduke had forwarded.

“ It is,” she replied.

“ Now, my child, pay some attention to my words. You see the very precarious state of Alice’s health, and you must have perceived the altered looks of Masterman. You remark how attentive he is to her, how much he loves and cherishes her, and you are quick enough to be aware how the least reference to Macintosh, and his money affairs alters his manner.”

“ I have not been here three days, and not remarked how variable he is.”

“ Any sudden outbreak on his part,” continued the Baronet, “ might lead to the most fatal consequences with Alice; and the only mode by which we can avoid this, is to keep from him all irritable subjects which might emanate from Macintosh. I have heard from Paris that he meditates sending a lengthy correspondence, which would inevitably produce the worst effects upon him, and consequently upon Alice; and I want you, when

this correspondence arrives, to keep it until I should call. I have arranged that the letters shall be given to you."

" Is this not a breach of trust on my part, Sir Dionysius? I am here housed and sheltered in my affliction, and to keep letters from their proper owner is surely not an honest proceeding."

" If it were for a bad purpose. But it is for a good one; and I hope my character is not so low in your estimation as to make you doubt my mind."

" I do not doubt it, but I tremble to interfere."

" Caroline," said the Baronet, as he took her hand, " you *must* do it! I conjure you, by all the friendship that ever existed between your father and myself, all your love for Alice, all your respect for Masterman, promise me to do it! I expect it to-morrow."

" What am I to do?"

" All the letters of any size, bearing a foreign post-mark, will be given to you unobserved, and all parcels will be also conveyed to you by Masterman's servant. All I ask is, that

the one you recognise as Macintosh's writing should be kept until my arrival. If I am present when it is opened, I do not fear the result; but if no one is near to check his first grief, great indeed may be the misery which may ensue. You know how nearly he is ruined through the duplicity of Macintosh, and any outbreak now might seriously affect your old friend Alice. Upon me be all the blame, if blame there can be."

Alice had been told of everything which had occurred in Paris. Some of the letters had been returned; but well she knew that others, all confirmatory of her guilt, were yet in the hands of that bad man.

At length she produced a son, which died an hour after its birth. Her anguish at this loss, her fear lest her duplicity should be discovered, the constant apprehension of some untoward event, her shattered nerves, her long illness, now began to show upon her mind; and of this she was well aware, and became fearfully awake to it during her lucid intervals, lest in her wanderings she might betray herself.

It was impossible to keep her now fondly attached husband from her room. Her sister never left her, her mother was constantly by her bed-side, and the only person to whom she had distantly hinted her embarrassing situation, was prohibited by his sex from being in her presence.

“What can it mean?” said Mrs. Rivers to the nurse. “She always reverts to the same subject, the lock of hair—the mole—the letters; and when she sings in her wanderings, it is the air she often sung to the guitar of Erin Mavoureen, but the words are not the same; and how she seems to smile as she repeats—

‘Where the silence of solitude saddens the scene.’”

“Lord bless you, ma’am,” said the monthly nurse, “it’s nothing at all. I have heard young ladies talk in such a manner, that if one did not know it was impossible, one should have believed all sorts of bad about them. The poor lady is only delirious.”

“Ay; but in the delirium there is always one subject which seems to rule the frantic

mind. Hark!—there again—she sings always the same tune. What can it be? I never remember to have heard it before. Listen!

“ ‘ Oh! it comes as the echo of love—and oh! never
Shall that song from my memory ever depart,
For it bids us unite in our fondness for ever,
And strikes the sole chord which awakens my heart.’ ”

“ I remember,” said the sister, “ seeing that verse written in Mr. Macintosh’s handwriting.”

As she pronounced the name, Alice extended her arms. “ Where—where is he?” she continued. “ Why he left me so suddenly, he said he could not marry me! Oh, faithless, faithless man! Oh no, he will never, never tell it! The lock of hair would betray me!”

And here she took her sister’s hand, and drawing her ear close to her, she said—

“ What would my mother say if she knew it? and how my sister would scorn me! But no, no—the secret is here! Oh, my poor heart!—and now it is dead—our child is dead—oh, if it had lived, how I could have loved it!”

“Don’t tremble so, Miss Rivers,” said the nurse. “Why, you look as if you believed all that is said. She will tell you, before long, that she is a queen, or a princess. You had better leave her to me.”

“They killed it, I say!” continued Alice. “Our pledge of wicked love—go, go—you made me deceive my husband, but I will not ruin him—you have had enough of his money—there, there, take the hundred pounds, and don’t write any more! Softly, softly!” she continued, as she made a sign of silence, “my husband read the slip of paper you left in his book: it was ungenerous, unmanly, and you will find ‘sweet love to bitter hatred turn.’ Do you remember the quotation—

“‘Heaven has no curse like love to hatred turn’d,
Or hell a fury like a woman’s scorn.’

Go away from the shrubbery, they will see you from the drawing-room window; I will shew the light as usual. Go, go, my sister has a jealous eye. To prayers—to prayers—ha, ha!” and here, perfectly exhausted, she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XLVI.

The events of the last chapter made a deep and fearful impression upon the minds of Mrs. Rivers and her daughter, who, retiring to their room, looked suspiciously at each other, endeavouring to fathom the thought which each strove to conceal and discredit. Neither spoke a word. Mrs. Rivers sat down by the window. A thousand evidences rose up unbidden to confirm the sister's worst suspicion; and yet she endeavoured to convince herself that the testimony was insufficient. At last she spoke—

“How curiously Alice wanders, dear mamma!”

“Curiously, my child ; what does that word mean?”

“It is like a dream, when hundreds of objects crowd upon our half-sleeping remembrance, and present so strange a confusion, that, from the most trivial remark, one might draw any unwarrantable conclusion.”

“I see the bent of your discourse, my child, and thank you for your kindness. You think that I suspect your sister of some dis-honour from her words. Poor Alice ! the death of her child has made her wander, and, as the nurse very sensibly remarked, we were silly indeed to found suspicion upon words of a disordered mind.”

In this manner did both try to destroy the impression already made, and each only confirmed it the more strongly. The very evasion of Mrs. Rivers’ answer made her daughter more thoughtful, and the idea that the daughter was pondering over the words of the patient, satisfied the mother that the impression was the same on each other’s mind.

On Alice’s recovery, after her late exhaus-

tion, she desired Miss Clincher might be called, and then beckoned the nurse to withdraw. The nurse whispered to Caroline that she should be close at hand, and withdrew.

“Have you been in the room, dear Caroline,” she said, “during the time I was insensible?”

“Yes, dearest,” replied Caroline.

“We all talk nonsense enough,” said Alice, with the pretty curl of her lip, “when we are deranged. Tell me, are you likely shortly to be married?”

“I am. Your former lover has consented to take me for better or worse, and Sir Dionysius does not withhold his approval.”

“May you be happier than I have been!”

Years have passed, and the scene has changed. From the speculations in which the son of Sir Dionysius was involved, the last days of the father became somewhat clouded. He died, as all good men die, fearing they have not done enough of good, and yet resigned to their inevitable fate. On his death-bed, the

old baronet related that, unknown to any one, he frequently had received tidings from Broadway, who in every letter was warm in his gratitude for the service which had been rendered to him, and who represented himself as growing prosperous and rich. Sir Dionysius never reproached his son for his having involved him in difficulties, but he instilled into his mind the necessity of prudence and circumspection for the future. When he died, every person of the village exhibited some of the outward signs of woe, and all bewailed the loss of one who had so signally benefited them during his life. He had the prayers of the poor, and the blessings of all.

It was in a small neat room that Alice read the following letter; it was the last she ever received from the man who had deceived and betrayed her. The cloud had burst. Notwithstanding all the precautions of Sir Dionysius, the packet of letters fell into the hands of Masterman. From that day he had never seen his wife. He travelled into distant countries, endeavouring to conceal his place of residence,

but he generously left enough to support her. She trembled as she unfolded the letter; twice had she resolved to burn it unread, but curiosity, that fatal inheritance of the sex, overcame her prudence, and, with a mind which recalled her earlier days of happiness, when the heart was young, and when love ruled it unbridled, she read it.

“ Some years have passed since, in the moment of distraction, and when maddened by the sudden blight of all my prospects, I inflicted the greatest calamity on the woman who once most dearly, fatally loved me. It is a consolation to me thus to confess my own degradation, even if the confession should never reach your eye. I pray you, Alice, in the name of that forfeited love, to read this letter; it is the outpourings of a heart, shattered by misfortune, and preying upon itself, anxious to atone for the mischief it has created, and growing weak in its pulsation, from the recollections of the past, and the gloom of the present. I loved you—I adored you; but with the changing life I led, and with the endeavour

to grasp at wealth, which fled as I approached it, my mind became somewhat estranged from you, and its occupation mastered its love. Now, when all around me is drear and dark—when years of imprisonment await me, from which I cannot escape—all my heart returns to you, and, in the recollection of the past, I trace the happiest moments of my existence in your society. Where now is the curl which animated those love-warmed lips ; where now the laughter-beaming eye, the animated warm cheek, which blushed as it confessed your love ? Oh, had I been less avaricious, and you more kind, the ruin of both had been averted. I promised on your marriage to respect your situation ; I only asked once more to hold your hand—once more to gaze upon that face of beauty, and impress again upon my memory all that I loved and cherished. It was denied me ; even the sad satisfaction of hearing from you was refused, and slips of paper, from the letters of others, only answered my request. Even now, as I write this, I can feel the first impulse of revenge, which was prompted from

this coolness. I can now retrace how, day after day, it grew in magnitude, until it overwhelmed us both; but for this your husband had not been ruined, nor you deserted. But, when my quick eye detected your wish of concealment—when I saw that prudence had overcome affection—I grew desperate as to my measures, and careless as to the consequences. It is in solitude that the true feeling of the heart is estimated. Now the hope of escape is gone, the maddening wish for wealth is annihilated; the roaming life which animated my youth is passed; the romance of love, and all its dangers and difficulties gone—I feel, nor am I ashamed to confess it, that you alone occupy my thoughts, that you alone fill up the chasms in my mind. When this reaches you, as reach you I feel it will,—when in this letter you retrace how fondly, how fatally you once loved, remember that he who pens these lines still retains the liveliest recollections of the past, and implores one line to speak your forgiveness; one line to admit that the miserable victim of imprisonment is not entirely indifferent to you; the

same direction, and the same address will be sufficient. I have done. I feel relieved in what I have written, and, if it should elicit an answer, I will bless the name of Alice; and if my tears should wet the letter which your hand shall trace, it shall be warmed and dried near the heart which now is true to you, and which madly planned the ruin which has occurred, in the fond hope that, when driven from your husband's home, mine might have been a refuge and a shelter. Farewell. I linger over this sheet. In a few hours it will be in the hands of my Alice; her eyes will trace this writing; her heart will throb, at least, at the remembrance of the past; and one tear may escape her, in kind remembrance of him, who, in the madness of revenge, in the whirlwind of excitement, ruined and betrayed her."

When the present Sir Dionysius married Miss Clincher he became aware that he had well selected his bride. Not over beautiful, she was not assailed by the many idle loungers who had frequented her husband's house.

She had seen enough of life to be contented in her situation, and, by studying to make home comfortable, to retain the affections and the company of her husband.

Two years after their wedding, a strange scrawl was handed to the Baronet, which, being deciphered, read as follows:—

“Honoured Sir. My days is done—my work’s accomplished. I broke a blood-vessel the day before yesterday, and the doctor is a coming to finish me; they bees kind enough to say that I shall die to-morrow, and have recommended me to look after my soul, so I’ve sent for an undertaker to measure me at once. I am more obliged to you than all the world, or the secretary of state either; and now, upon my dying bed, thank you, again and again, for all the shame you saved me. I often took the liberty of saying that I was a getting rich, and now I’m a going to die; but thank God, I have still strength left to be grateful. I have made a will, and left you everything, and that’s not a trifle; but it’s nothing to what I owe you. It won’t make

you none the happier, excepting to know that I was always a thinking of you to the last; but when your young one marries, it may set him up in horses, and I hope he may always have as honest a groom, as your grateful servant,

“ JEM BROADWAY.”

Jem had been one of the first convicts sent to Australia. His good conduct and his industry made him a handsome fortune, and the Baronet found himself as rich as he would have been had he not involved himself with Macintosh, and, as he laid down the scrawl, he said—

“ There is more gratitude in the poor than in the rich; never again will I spurn the poor from my door, and never have I had a greater moral lesson than this poor fellow has written. Our child’s name shall be Dionysius Broadway Mopus.”

“ The weakness of a woman’s heart prompts me to reply to your letter. It is said, and truly said, that women never forget their first love; and, even now, almost destitute as I am, —shunned by all, and despised by those who

formerly envied and flattered me—still do I retain some affection for him who caused this ruin. I will not recur to the past, but I speak of the future. In a few years you will be freed from your prison: the long confinement will have, I hope, obliterated in you the thirst for wealth. Strive, by some honest industry, to gain a sufficiency; but never—never, seek to discover me. I implore you to leave me in my solitude and repentance. In spite of all the injury I have received from your hands, still am I woman enough to confess how dear, how very dear, you were to me, and how I struggled to avert the fate I saw impending. All the joy I ever experienced in your society flashes across me, as my memory reproduces former pleasures—all the evil I have received at your hands is buried in oblivion. I have written this, as much to ease my own mind as, I hope, to comfort yours. All the delights of youth are passed; all the blandishments of wealth lost; all the charms of society banished. My old age must be one of bitter remembrance—a retrospect, clouded

and gloomy, through which I can still see how I might have been honoured and esteemed, if I had never listened to the man who charmed me by his talents, and lured me by the appearance of his sincerity. Farewell—farewell! This is the last line you will ever receive from me. You will read in it, that early love can never be entirely obliterated, and that all the mischief and misfortunes which that love has heaped upon me, can be forgotten and forgiven by such a heart as still beats in the bosom of the once beloved, once esteemed,

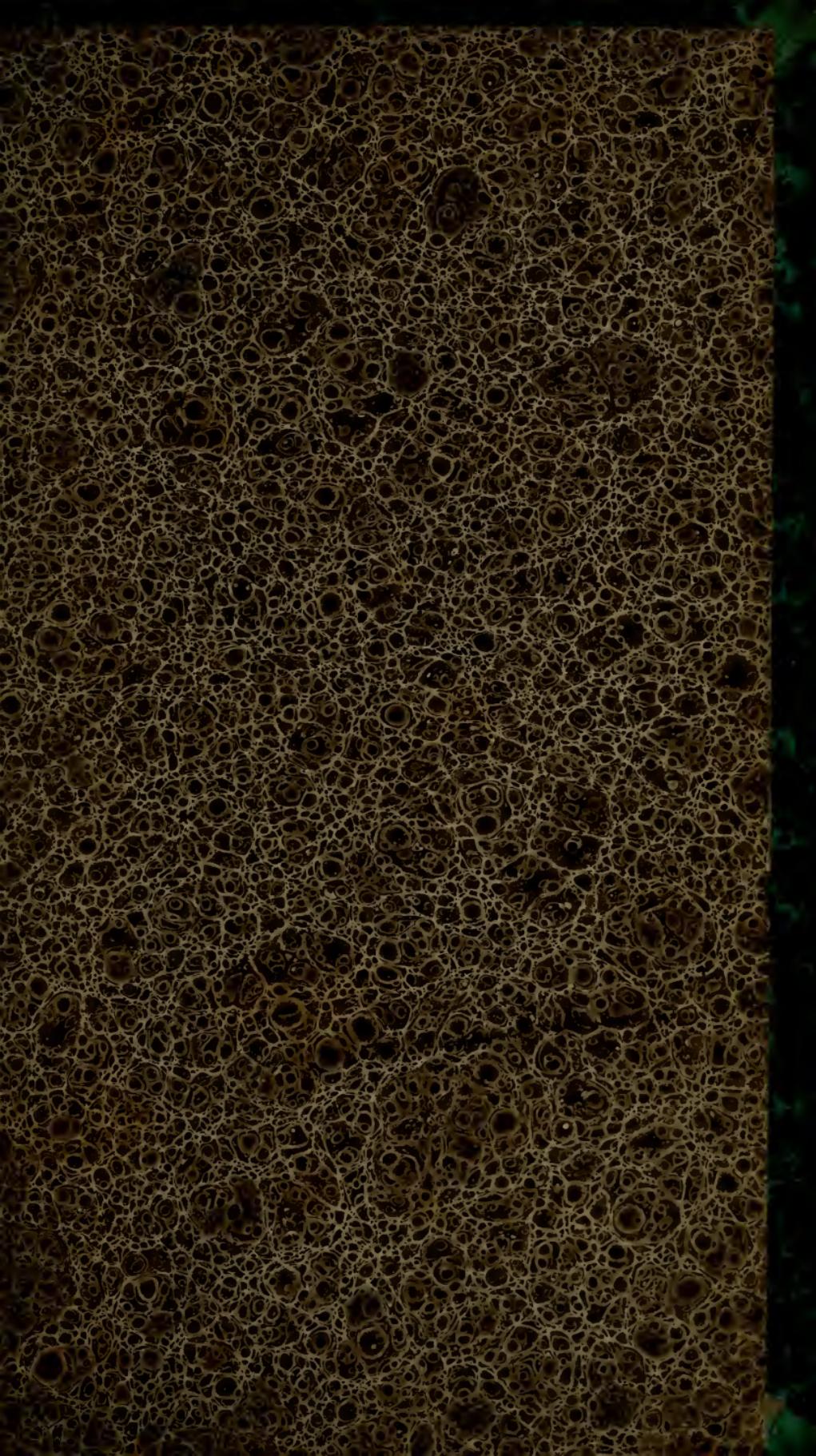
“ ALICE RIVERS.”

THE END.

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